

DOCTORAL THESIS

How trainees experience the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety A phenomenological investigation

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**How trainees experience the process of becoming
a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety:
A phenomenological investigation**

by

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**A thesis submitted for partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the degree of PsychD**

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Previous studies have suggested that becoming a counsellor takes place according to stages and that development can be explained through the achievement of specified tasks. The professional training process is also understood to give rise to considerable anxiety with this traditionally conceptualised as a predominately negative experience hindering the learning process. The aims of the current study were: 1) to understand and identify how counselling psychology trainees make sense of and experience their development in becoming counselling psychologists, 2) to understand how anxiety is implicated in trainees' growth and development into becoming counselling psychologists, and 3) through the application of an empirical existential phenomenological framework to promote an alternative perspective to the dominant medical model in relation to anxiety and the meaning attached to this experience in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Five trainee counselling psychologists and two recently qualified counselling psychologists were interviewed for this research project. The phenomenological analysis identified situated structural descriptions with the themes from these individual accounts forming the basis of a general structural description of the phenomenon of anxiety in becoming a counselling psychologist. By means of this existential phenomenological analysis, the multiple meanings attached to the experience of becoming with reference to anxiety were investigated. Two important findings emerged namely; 1) anxiety was not a negative, debilitating process for the trainees and 2) that counselling psychology's pluralist theoretical affiliations whilst anxiety provoking contributed to the depth of transformation experienced by trainees. By adopting a pluralistic stance ambiguity was found to be prevalent in the experience of anxiety; this opened up the possibilities for becoming for this group of trainees. Therefore a non-pathological perspective of anxiety in training is proposed by this study.

The completion of this project is a significant moment for me and marks the end of a long and convoluted journey. On reflection I am aware of the profound effect this project has had on my life and development which has been challenging and illuminating in equal measure. I am very aware that this project could not have been completed without the support and advice from several people who I would like to thank.

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1.1 INTRODUCTION

The title of this study is *“How trainees experience the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety: A phenomenological investigation”* and involves trainees’ accounts of their development and the struggles in becoming a counselling psychologist. The main focus of this study is on trainee’s accounts of the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with particular reference to experiences of anxiety. A phenomenological approach, as applied to psychological research attempts to describe and understand more adequately how individuals experience and make sense of their worlds; this includes both observable behaviour and the entire range of interpreted states such as anxiety (Spinelli, 2005).

This chapter will introduce how the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety is conceptualised in the literature which will provide a rationale for the present study. In addition gaps in knowledge will be identified specifically as they relate to the particular area being discussed. The aims of the current investigation will be clearly delineated which will demonstrate why further study in this area is important. Reflexive accounts will be considered and discussed in relation to how the topic under investigation was identified by the researcher. Definitions of the key terms used in this study will be offered to improve clarity.

1.2. Aims of the research

There are three aims in this study namely, 1). To understand and identify how counselling psychology trainees make sense of and experience their development into counselling psychologists; 2). To understand how anxiety is implicated in the growth and development into a counselling psychologist; 3). Through the application of an existential-phenomenological

framework to promote an alternative perspective to the dominant medical model in relation to anxiety and how it takes place in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. The rationale for these aims will be explicated from a review of the relevant literatures. The aims of this study are consonant with the emphasis on consciousness, subjectivity and constructions of lived experience which Manafi (2010) suggests are key features of counselling psychology inquiry. Therefore, the overarching focus of this study is to highlight how the process of becoming a counselling psychologist is experienced and made sense of from the perspective of trainees. It is however important to state that this is one perspective amongst many and is based on a reading of these co-researcher's accounts taken at a particular time; a different set of co-researchers might have provided different views.

This study is situated within the broader context of counsellor development models specifically those identified by Loganbill, Hardy and Delworth (1982) and Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992). Qualitative studies in this field identify changes which take place for trainees as a result of the professional training process. Friedman and Kaslow (1986), Grater (1985), Loganbill et al (1982), Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) and Ward and House (1998) propose stage models to describe how change occurs. These models suggest that change and development occurs through achieving certain tasks. Due to this developmental and learning process several claims are made namely; that trainee counsellors emerge as more realistic and integrated (Loganbill et al. 1982), develop a coherent professional identity (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986), develop greater authenticity and an ability to tolerate clinical ambiguity (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992) and display greater clinical independence (Ward & House, 1998). While these studies generally disaggregate personal from professional development, writers such as Donati and Watts (2005), Irving and Williams (1997), Johns (1996) and Wilkins (1997) emphasise that personal and professional development are interlinked. Therefore the developmental models proposed by Friedman and Kaslow (1986), Grater (1985), Loganbill et al. (1982) and Skovholt and Rønnestad, (1992) which rely on a stage-wise conception of development are limited as they imply reductionism and tend not to view development as a holistic process.

Counsellor development models proposed by Friedman and Kaslow (1986), Grater (1985), Loganbill et al. (1982) and Skovholt and Rønnestad, (1992) have been formulated on the basis of observer accounts. Models such as these which give precedence to observer rather than trainee accounts are however limited in their explanatory and descriptive power. In particular it is possible that important insights which trainees may have in relation to their experiences of the developmental process are obscured. Therefore this study will aim to address these shortcomings by obtaining nuanced and idiosyncratic descriptions from trainees of how they experienced and made sense of the process of developing into a counselling psychologist. Additionally the position of the researcher as both an observer and participant in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist adds a further dimension to the findings of this study. Reflexive accounts will be integrated into the study as a means of highlighting this added dimension for instance as seen in Box 1.

An important experience identified in counsellor development studies is that of anxiety. Pervasive anxiety is known to exist in the training process and is acknowledged by studies such as Brooks, Holttum and Lavender (2002), Davies (2008), Friedman and Kaslow (1986), Nutt-Williams, Judge, Hill and Hoffman (1997), Rizq (2006), Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992, 2003). Trainee anxiety is understood in the literature to be related to unrealistic expectations (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992, 2003; Truett, 2001) and ambiguities (Pica, 1998), whilst Rizq (2006) attributes trainee anxiety to the pluralistic value base of counselling psychology. This value base is positioned in a postmodern context and emphasises multiplicity, flux and transformation (Rappoport, Baumgardner & Boone, 1999). Rizq (2006) identifies this postmodern value base to be responsible for some of the difficulties trainees experience particularly as they navigate the demands of the training process. Despite the diversity of possible causes identified for trainee anxiety, the aforementioned studies generally assume anxiety to have a detrimental effect on the developmental process.

Counsellor development implies the acquisition of competence through various learning processes and activities. Experiential and reflective learning are identified as the main

processes involved in developing competence as a trainee counselling psychologist. These forms of learning which are involved in becoming a counselling psychologist have been associated with anxiety in trainees by Friedman and Kaslow (1986), Martin (2010) and Truett (2001). Additionally self-awareness which is seen as a goal of counsellor development (Connors, 1994; Johns, 1996; Mearns, 1997) has been noted by Jensen (1995) as creating considerable pressure for trainees. These studies appear to suggest that an association exists between the learning processes involved in becoming a counselling psychologist and anxiety. There is however limited research into how trainees experience growth through the experiential and reflective learning processes and the attendant increase in self-awareness which occurs in training to become a counselling psychologist.

One of the key aspects involved in counsellor development is personal development (Donati & Watts, 2005). Rizq (2010) identifies authenticity as an important part of personal development for counselling psychology trainees. In the person centred literature authenticity is understood as 'congruence' with self-awareness identified by Tudor and Worrall (1994) as a means of achieving congruence. Anxiety was found to be related to the development of congruence by Nutt-Williams et al. (1997) in doctoral counselling psychology trainees. Consequently, authenticity is considered to be central to the developmental process in becoming a counselling psychologist and is discussed in relation to existential thought. This perspective offers an alternative way of looking at anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist which departs from the dominant discourse. The aforementioned authors however do not explore how anxiety is related to the developmental process. It is through exploring how trainees make sense of growth and development with reference to anxiety that the gap in the literature will attempt to be addressed.

Qualitative approaches have been employed in diverse ways to better understand the trainee experience. However a gap in the literature identified that a better understanding informed by description was required. Dilthey (1889/1893) discussed the benefits of descriptive methods as a precursor to the development of explanatory frameworks; for him adequate understanding of

subjective acts could only be achieved through careful description of the subtle complexities of lived experience (Throop, 2002). Therefore an empirical existential phenomenological approach was used to investigate and describe the meanings co-researchers attached to the process of becoming a counselling psychologist.

Existential phenomenology is posited by Manafi (2010) as emphasising a relational epistemology which views meaning as inextricably linked to experience. This philosophy bridges the gap between mind and body and subjective and objective and emphasises the context in which existence unfolds; false dichotomies between subject and object, internal and external are rejected by this approach. It is through the dialogical relationship between the being-in-the-world (Heidegger, 1962) that meaning is created. The approach developed by Giorgi (1985) offers a method which works with the philosophical insights of phenomenology and existentialism to produce a coherent way of conducting psychological research through descriptive and reflective techniques. This approach is advocated by Wertz (2005) specifically when there is a requirement to understand a particular phenomenon and to generate new meanings in relation to already studied phenomena. As a result the empirical-existential phenomenological method was identified as able to explore in a fuller way the relational context in which becoming a counselling psychologist occurs.

The aims of this research are to provide an in-depth description of how the process of becoming a counselling psychologist is understood by trainees and how meaning is disclosed through the experience of anxiety. The findings of this study may have implications in the following areas, namely: 1) for education and learning in counselling psychology, but also in counselling and psychotherapy disciplines more generally; 2) it may be of value to those providing trainings in counselling psychology; 3) it may be valuable for trainees themselves currently in training, helping them set their experiences within a wider context; 4) to those entering counselling psychology training as preparatory reading, assisting and preparing them for what training may potentially consist of; 5) it may be of interest to trainers as indications of

how changes are experienced and the difficulties which are experienced, 6) it may contribute to the professional literature base on the personal development of counselling psychologists.

1.3. Reflexivity

Qualitative research is a personal activity (McLeod, 2001). This stance draws attention to the impossibility of remaining 'outside of' (Nightingale & Cromby, 1999, p. 228) one's subject matter. Reflexivity urges one to explore the ways in which the researcher's involvement influences and informs the research process and findings. In counselling psychology a commitment is made to reflexivity (Boucher, 2010). Whilst Finlay (2009) highlights the importance of reflexivity in phenomenological research as a means of moving beyond the partiality of previous understandings; this occurs through the process of continually reflecting on one's experience and the phenomenon under investigation. This position departs from a positivist epistemology which attempts to foster the illusion of objectivity and detachment from the research process and subject matter. In this regard Giorgi (1994, p. 205) has firmly stated that 'nothing can be accomplished without subjectivity, so its elimination is not the solution. Rather how the subject is present is what matters'. Therefore the ways in which the researcher's subjectivity influenced the identification of the research question will now be discussed. At various points in this study reflexivity will be dealt with separately in boxes with the first person used; this is in keeping with the personal nature of reflexivity and the importance attached to this process in shaping the process and findings.

Box 1: Personal reflexivity – identification of research question

I had both personal and professional reasons for enquiring into how anxiety was implicated in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. In the first year of my counselling psychology training I experienced high levels of anxiety and in discussion with other training colleagues discovered it to be a ubiquitous experience. On a personal level I was curious to know whether this was due to my own learning history and background or whether this was an experience connected to the counselling psychology training process. On a professional level I felt moved to investigate and clarify this phenomenon both to add to the counselling psychology literature base but also to shed light on this process for future trainees.

1.4. Concepts and conventions used in this study

Many of the concepts and terms used in phenomenology and in this study have different meanings to how they are generally used. To facilitate greater clarity the manner in which these terms are used in this study will be defined below.

Within existential phenomenology generally and this study specifically certain concepts are used which are considered to be foundational to this perspective. These concepts are important in conveying the meanings which structure the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Additionally some words are used interchangeably which require clarification at the outset to avoid ambiguity. In this regard a tension exists between traditional psychological language and phenomenological writing as the language of phenomenology is descriptive. Giorgi (1985) suggests that to be sensitive to the phenomenon as it appears, there is a need to return to description which allows for radical meanings to emerge. As will be seen throughout the current thesis, description is the key tool that underpins this study and therefore language and concepts that strengthen this tool will be employed.

It is acknowledged that phenomenological thought and writing uses concepts in ways which differ from traditional psychological ways which can create ambiguity. Giorgi (1997, p. 236) suggests that in phenomenology consciousness can be understood as 'referring to the medium of access to whatever is given to awareness'. He states that 'consciousness is not simply a "neutral" presenter of objects or givens but rather contributes to the very meaning of such objects by varying modes, styles and forms' (Giorgi, 1997, p. 236). Structure is an important concept in this study and is used interchangeably with 'essence or form' which Valle, King and Halling (1989, p. 14) describe as 'the commonality running through the many diverse appearances of the phenomenon'. Structure is made present through meaning and as a consequence one of the aims of the existential-phenomenologist is to disclose the nature of structure through meaning. Churchill (1991, p. 5) offers a definition of "phenomenon" which is in keeping with how it is understood in this study, namely, '[i]t means that something is being brought to the encounter with a consciousness in whose presence meaning becomes illuminated.' Therefore consciousness is central in phenomenology and contributes to meaning; it is through describing how this meaning appears in consciousness that the structure of the phenomenon can be more clearly understood.

The term 'counselling psychologist' will be used when reference is made to studies or literature discussing counselling psychologists, in all other instances the terms 'counsellor', 'therapist' or 'psychotherapist' will be used interchangeably. Participants are referred to as 'co-researchers' and in this study were trainee counselling psychologists. In this study empirical existential phenomenological psychology is also referred to as existential phenomenology, empirical phenomenology or phenomenology; they are however taken to refer to the same approach and philosophy.

Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the notion of 'becoming' used throughout this study denotes the trainee's project of moving towards developing into a counselling

psychologist. The manner in which 'becoming' is understood in this study is informed by existential and humanistic writing most notably Kierkegaard (1844/ 1980), May (1977), Rogers (1961), and Van Deurzen (1997). May (1977 cites Kierkegaard, 1844, p.37) offers an interpretation of Kierkegaard which provides some clarity on how 'becoming' is conceptualised in this study namely that '[wo]man as the creature who is continually beckoned by possibility, who conceives of possibility, visualises it, and by creative activity carries it into actuality.' Van Deurzen (1997, p. 43) suggests that this involves 'becoming aware of my own acts of being, knowing, thinking and relating.' Whilst Rogers (1961, p. 27) states '[w]hen I am thus able to be in process... Life is guided by a changing understanding of and interpretation of my experience. It is always in the process of becoming'. These statements taken together suggest that 'becoming' a counselling psychologist involves creatively and with awareness moving towards the actualisation of possibilities with the self conceived of as always in a process of becoming.

The process of becoming a counselling psychologist is associated with the experience of anxiety (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986; Nutt-Williams et al. 1997; Rizq, 2006). The manner in which anxiety is understood in this study is influenced by authors within the existential tradition specifically, the philosopher Kierkegaard (1844/ 1980), May (1977) and Van Deurzen (1997). Counselling psychology is strongly attached to existential-phenomenology which emphasises a relational epistemology (Thayer-Bacon, Kincheloe & Steinberg, 2003). May (1977) links anxiety with reflection and self-awareness which is of particular importance to learning to become a counselling psychologist where these skills or ways of being are emphasised. He states that '[a]nxiety is now reflective; the individual can through self-awareness partially direct his own development' (May, 1977, p. 42). Whilst for Kierkegaard (1980, p. 42) 'anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility'. In visualising and moving towards becoming a counselling psychologist, the trainee has the freedom to define what he/ she will become. It is suggested that anxiety plays an important role in facilitating a move towards actualising one's possibilities with Van Deurzen (1997, p. 63) who is a counselling psychologist, clarifying this role stating that 'anxiety calls me back to myself and that unifies the ambiguities and contradictions in my world'. Therefore the existential view holds that it is through anxiety that an

inward and reflective stance is facilitated which opens up the freedom to define what and how one will become a counselling psychologist.

1.5. The Structure and presentation of this study

There are five chapters in this study with each chapter addressing different aspects of how the experience of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety is understood in the literature, researched and how knowledge about this phenomenon is extended. A reflexive stance is adopted in this study and is clearly presented throughout the chapters at specific points to highlight the researcher's subjectivity. In Chapter Two relevant literatures pertaining to this study are presented and critiqued. In Chapter Three epistemological and methodological issues are discussed in relation to how the research question is investigated; additionally the analytic steps taken to investigate the phenomenon are outlined. Chapter Four presents the findings of the study and proposes a structural description (Giorgi, 1985), where co-researchers account's are provided as a means of elucidating the phenomenon of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to the experience of anxiety. Chapter Five offers a discussion and integration of the findings in relation to the extant literatures. The implications are considered and recommendations are made based on the findings of this study.

2.1. INTRODUCTION

Research has found that anxiety is prevalent and is experienced at high levels during the professional training process (Brooks, et al 2002, Cushway, 1992, Nutt-Williams, et al 1998). To account for this counsellor development models have been formulated which suggest that anxiety is a normative experience in the professional training process (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986, Grater, 1985, Loganbill, et al 1982, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992, Yogeve, 1982). These models are however not based on counselling psychologists therefore highlighting the need for research on how counselling psychologists develop with reference to anxiety. These models in addition to other research on counsellor development have identified that unrealistic expectations is a possible factor in the experience of anxiety for trainees (Rizq, 2009, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992, Truell, 2001). The ambiguity of therapeutic knowledge and a pluralistic value base found within counselling psychology is also considered as a potential source of anxiety for trainee counselling psychologists (Lewis, 2008, Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009, Rizq, 2006). In the counselling, psychotherapy and counselling psychology field's development is conceptualised as falling within two broad areas namely personal and professional development (Donati & Watts, 2005; Johns, 1996). The learning outcomes and development which take place on psychotherapy and counselling psychology training are considered by Alred (2006), Dryden and Thorne (1991) and Martin (2010) to contribute to the difficulties trainees experience.

The purpose of this review is as follows: firstly, to critically appraise the literature on anxiety as conceptualised within the major therapeutic traditions in counselling psychology and as studied in relation to the training process; secondly, to analyse counsellor development models and specific aspects which constitute the development into a counsellor; thirdly the rationale and relevance of conducting this study will be provided by identifying gaps in the literature in relation to anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Therefore this review

will look at the literature on the prevalence of trainee anxiety during the professional training process followed by an analysis of anxiety as conceptualised in the psychology and psychotherapy field. Research and literature discussing the potential reasons for anxiety during the training process will be highlighted. This will be followed by an explication of how anxiety is implicated in personal and professional development. The final section will discuss counsellor development and anxiety with reference to counsellor development models. Therefore by focusing on these areas the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety is grounded in and clarified in relation to the extant literature.

2.2. Anxiety in becoming a counselling psychologist

Studies investigating trainees' experiences during the professional training process have identified anxiety as prevalent; these studies will be discussed in the section below. Models of counsellor development such as those developed by Friedman and Kaslow, (1986), Loganbill et al. (1983) and Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) have highlighted that anxiety during the training process is ubiquitous which offers support for the contention that training to become a counselling psychologist involves anxiety. However these studies implicitly assume that anxiety has a predominately negative effect on the trainee. In the current study this simplistic understanding of anxiety is questioned. To further ground the understanding and experience of anxiety, it will be considered from within the major therapeutic orientations which influence the knowledge base of counselling psychology. Following from this the positioning of knowledge and the role of expectations within counselling psychology will be discussed specifically as potential sources of anxiety for trainees during the process of becoming a counselling psychologist.

2.2.1. The prevalence of anxiety in training

Anxiety is a complex phenomenon and as a term is used to refer to a wide range of emotional states. Frequently anxiety has been conflated with stress and fear which existential writers such as Kierkegaard (1946/1980) would disagree with. The basis for this objection is that fear and

anxiety have a different focus. In the former the focus is on the specific things within the world whereas anxiety is directed towards existence. The definition of anxiety put forward by Greenberg and Paivio (2003) offers a guide to how anxiety is understood in this study namely;

Anxiety is a response to symbolic, psychological, or social situations, rather than immediately present physical danger. Anxiety is a response to uncertainty that arises when the sense of self-integrity, coherence, continuity or agency is threatened... Anxiety is also a key motivator of human action and interaction. The capacity to experience anxiety is almost synonymous with the capacity to plan for the future, and the increased arousal associated with anxiety can enhance performance. (p. 194)

The above mentioned definition asserts several ideas of relevance to the current study's positioning in relation to anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Greenberg and Paivio's (2003) definition moves away from conceptualising anxiety as pathological which is in keeping with the commitment this study has to a de-pathologized understanding of anxiety. Definitions such as those found within the medical model e.g. Spielberger, Gorsuch, Lushene, Vagg & Jacobs (1983) tend to view anxiety as a disorder and are positioned within a broader discourse of diagnosis and pathologization. Discourses such as these are explicitly or implicitly adhered to in the field of abnormal psychology and in texts such as the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM). It is through imposing abstract stereotypical categories that emotions and discomfort, modes of behaviour and thinking then become prescribed and proscribed. Parker (1999) argues that this can be seen as a form of social control. Therefore it follows that by pathologizing emotional states such as anxiety and reducing it to a collection of symptoms little is gained in understanding the complexity of this experience.

Greenberg and Paivio's (2003) definition offers a positive view of anxiety as *motivational* which Orlans and Van Scoyoc (2009) highlight is in keeping with the emphasis in counselling psychology on promoting well-being over illness. Their definition of anxiety makes reference to

agency which has strong existential connotations and is in keeping with the existential-phenomenological slant favoured in this study. As a result an association between anxiety and the possibility of exercising choice and freedom in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist is noted in this definition. Additionally the focus on *uncertainty* is pertinent to this study as it links with the literature on pluralism in counselling psychology as a potential source of anxiety amongst trainees. Therefore the definition of anxiety put forward by Greenberg and Paivio (2003) is in keeping with a de-pathologized stance proposed by this study whilst also alluding to existential themes which may be implicated in the phenomenon of anxiety.

Models of counsellor development define the characteristics associated with the developmental process taking place in trainees undergoing professional training. Anxiety is considered in the literature as a pervasive experience for trainees and novice counsellors, with a number of authors supporting this contention (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986, Grater, 1985, Loganbill, et al, 1982, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 2003, Yogeve, 1982). Anxiety is considered in counsellor development models to be either implicitly (e.g. Friedman & Kaslow, 1986, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992) or explicitly (e.g. Grater, 1985) a negative experience; this assumption is questioned by the current study. Although these studies do not elaborate on how anxiety is implicated in the development process, an association is nevertheless implied to exist between anxiety and the development into a counsellor; this assumption is shared by the current study. In this regard although the role of anxiety in the acquisition of competence by counsellors was not elaborated in Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992) study, a common goal is shared with the current study namely to understand more fully how growth and development into a competent counsellor takes place. Therefore a gap has been identified in Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992) research which this study will attempt to address specifically in relation to how anxiety is involved in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Consequently this research assumes that learning to become a counselling psychologist involves anxiety and through investigating this process will attempt to describe and identify how this is experienced by trainee counselling psychologists.

Studies located within a positivist epistemology have identified the prevalence of trainee anxiety during the professional training process. For example Cushway (1992) studied 287 clinical psychology trainees using the General Health Questionnaire and found that 59% of trainees experienced psychological symptoms. Reasons cited for high levels of anxiety were poor supervision, course structure and organisation (Cushway, 1992). This study is helpful in drawing attention to the prevalence of anxiety during the training process. Additionally the inclusion of context in understanding anxiety in the process of becoming is of particular significance to this study; it is suggested that it is not possible to understand the person without reference to the interaction with the environment. Orlans and Van Scoyoc (2009) note that the inclusion of context into research and practice ties in with the broader aims of counselling psychology. However there are important limitations in Cushway's (1992) study which are connected to the positivistic epistemology subscribed to; a causal and linear relationship is posited between the experience of anxiety and course supervision and structure. The subjective meanings ascribed to the experience of anxiety in the training process are omitted from Cushway's (1992) findings. A further limitation is noted with regards to the assumption that trainees are passively impacted on by the environment and have no agency in the construction of meaning in relation to the training process; this assumption diverges from the position taken by the current study where individuals are considered to be active in meaning-making.

Research subscribing to positivistic assumptions clearly has some value to add in extending awareness of how anxiety is related to the development process in trainee psychologists. In this regard research conducted by Nutt-Williams et al. (1998) is highly relevant to the current study. Seven *counselling psychology doctoral trainees* were studied and showed heightened levels of anxiety which lessened in intensity as development progressed and competence increased. Findings were extrapolated from the answers given in response to two scales, namely the State – Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger, et al, 1983) and the Countertransference Factors Inventory (CFI; Van Wagoner, Gelso, Hayes & Diemer, 1991). The findings of this study are important as *doctoral counselling psychology trainees* were found to have high levels of anxiety which lessened as development took place. As a result these

findings converge with the assumption made in this study namely that anxiety may be implicated in the process of becoming a *counselling psychologist*.

A further study which is located within a positivistic epistemology was conducted by Brooks et al, (2002) in relation to the experience of anxiety in trainee clinical psychologists. A variety of questionnaires were administered to 364 clinical psychology trainees with 18% of trainees reporting significant anxiety problems. These authors identified the presence of three related variables namely personality style, expectations and level of psychological adaptation as influencing the occurrence of anxiety. A limitation of this study is that clinical psychology trainees were studied, which may make the findings difficult to apply to the experience of training to become a counselling psychologist. There is however a further limitation in this study based on the research methodology employed. Hypothetical constructs such as personality style and psychological adaptation are reified suggesting that experiences and categories are assumed to exist objectively. This research is however significant as it highlights the prevalence of anxiety in trainees in relation to expectations.

Phenomenology can be located broadly within a constructionist epistemology which emphasises the exploration of subjective experiences as a means of understanding a particular phenomenon in a more adequate way. A reflexive phenomenological approach was used by Davies (2008) where 100 psychoanalytic trainees were interviewed in relation to the role of anxiety in the training experience. He found that trainees experienced pervasive anxiety about their ability to undertake clinical work and whether they possessed the competence to succeed with clients (Davies, 2008). This study is important as it offers additional empirical support for the growing body of research identifying the prevalence of anxiety in the training process. Additionally further support is provided for the assumption that anxiety is associated with competence in training to become a counselling psychologist. However as a psychoanalytic context was studied these results should be applied with some caution to counselling psychology trainings. Therefore this study is important as it emphasises the interaction between

the individual and the training environment which draws attention to context as an important factor in trainee anxiety.

2.2.2. How trainee anxiety is positioned in different therapeutic traditions

The concept of anxiety can be understood in a number of different ways with this influencing how it is thought of and studied. Anxiety is noted by several authors (Davies, 2008, Emanuel, 2000) as constitutive of the learning process. This is of relevance to the current study which is interested in how anxiety occurs in learning to become a counselling psychologist. In psychology anxiety is understood and conceptualised within the main therapeutic traditions of psychoanalytic thought, person-centred theory and the existentialist tradition. Therefore anxiety will be discussed in relation to these traditions.

2.2.2.1. Anxiety in Cognitive Behavioural therapy

Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and theory is not included in the following section despite being one of the major therapeutic orientations informing the practice of counselling psychology (Woolfe, Strawbridge, Douglas & Dryden, 2010). The motivation for excluding CBT is primarily due to the current study's emphasis on existential and phenomenological understandings of anxiety. Additionally CBT has traditionally been practiced in the context of a 'pathologizing diagnosis' (Boucher, 2010, p.156) with anxiety viewed in this approach as a 'thinking disorder' (Wells, 1997, p. 2) and one which is located within the individual. Beck, Emery & Greenberg (1985, p. 192) describes anxiety in the following way: '[t]he locus of the disorder in anxiety states is ... the hypervalent cognitive schemas relevant to danger that are continually presenting a view of reality as dangerous and the self as vulnerable'. As this departs from the non-pathologizing stance put forward in this study in relation to anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist, CBT was excluded from the following discussion.

2.2.2.2. Trainee anxiety in Psychoanalytic theory

Central to psychoanalytic theories is the notion that development cannot occur without some measure of anxiety. Therefore anxiety is seen as inextricably bound up with development. Freud considered anxiety of central importance and noted it to be 'a nodal point at which the most various and important questions converge, a riddle whose solution would be bound to throw a flood of light on our whole mental existence' (Freud, 1933/ 1991, p. 441). In this statement Freud alludes to importance of anxiety in questions concerning existence which links in with the existential position of this study. Klein (1948) identified the inevitability of anxiety and considered it to be present from birth. For Klein (1948) the presence of a death instinct at the beginning of life was believed to give rise to intrapsychic conflict which activated the need for defences to manage intolerable anxiety states. The capacity to bear anxiety was viewed by the Kleinians as a major developmental achievement and linked this to a creative capacity (Lemma, 2003). Despite acknowledging the central role of anxiety in human development and creativity, Freud considered it a sign of pathology with Akhtar (2009) suggesting that psychoanalysis views symptoms of psychopathology as attempts to avoid anxiety. Therefore in the psychoanalytic tradition anxiety is associated with development which supports findings of previously cited research in section 2.2.1 where anxiety is associated with professional development.

2.2.2.3. Trainee anxiety in the Person-Centred tradition

In the person centred tradition all human beings are thought to be in a process of change and *becoming* which finds its roots in Humanistic theory. This process is thought of as the actualising tendency and can be applied to the trainee in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Tudor (2007) notes that students engaged in person centred counselling training are likely to experience anxiety and tension due to the emphasis on fluidity, self-direction and personal power. In this statement process and change are understood to be factors implicated in the experience of anxiety amongst trainees which converges with assumptions made in this study.

Person centred theory rejects the notion of diagnosis or categorising people. Instead anxiety is understood in person-centred theory as a psychological difficulty which takes place due to a discrepancy between the organismic valuing tendency and the self-concept (Von Kalmthout, 2007); this discrepancy is experienced as internal tension giving rise to anxiety. Whilst Sanders (2007) identifies anxiety, depression and confusion as taking place through the build up of tension and when the self-concept is threatened. McLeod (2003) does not consider anxiety to be a pathological experience but rather one which signifies change through a greater awareness of physical and visceral sensations. Implied in this position is the notion of anxiety as drawing attention to aspects of self and stimulating a reflective process. The BPS (2009) and Corrie and Lane (2001) identify reflection and awareness as key learning processes for counselling psychology training. On the basis of these views anxiety is noted to be of significance in the change process through stimulating awareness of self which is an important aspect in counselling psychology training.

2.2.2.4. Trainee anxiety in Existential thought

Anxiety is a central concern in existential literature (Heidegger, 1962, Kierkegaard, 1844, May, 1977, Sartre, 1943) and is considered to be an intrinsic part of human living. In writing about the meaning of anxiety May (1977, p.xiv) suggested that it pointed to a struggle taking place, '[l]ike fever it testifies that a struggle is going on in the personality.' This struggle can be associated with the changes which are thought to occur to the person of the trainee in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. For Spinelli (2008) who is an existential counselling psychologist, anxiety occurs through the recognition of meaning as flexible and plastic as opposed to rigid and defined by fixed characteristics. Spinelli (2008) adds that anxiety occurs due to a reflection on assumptions and a re-examination of old ideas leading to an extension of meanings and knowledge. This position is interesting especially when reference is made to Rizq's (2006) contention that pluralistic practice is associated with anxiety in counselling psychology trainees. Therefore the existential position suggests that anxiety during the learning process can be understood as taking place due to the realisation that meaning is fluid and not fixed, leading to a revision of knowledge and the development of new meanings.

Anxiety occurs as a result of self-awareness and self-consciousness (Van Deurzen, 2002), with anxiety related to the level of self-awareness which a person has achieved. It is postulated that through self-awareness the possibility for freedom and greater authenticity arises. This position is represented in Kierkegaard's (1844/ 1980, p.42) thought where he notes that 'anxiety is freedom's actuality as the possibility of possibility'. This position is reiterated by May (1977) who considers anxiety to be fundamental in the actualisation of possibility. The notion of anxiety taking place when one is confronted with defining what one will become is of particular relevance to counselling psychology trainees and draws attention to the central position of this study. Hence, the existential tradition highlights anxiety as an important process through facilitating self awareness and greater authenticity which is of particular relevance to this study. In this regard the BPS (2009) and Leijssen (2001) note that greater awareness and authenticity are important aspects in therapist training.

2.2.3. Sources of anxiety for trainee counselling psychologists

The literature has identified anxiety as prevalent in the training process for counsellors (Cushway 1992, Grater, 1985, Loganbill et al, 1982, Nutt-Williams et al, 1998, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992, Yorgev, 1985). However a clear understanding of the possible sources of this anxiety is not adequately addressed in the studies discussed in section 2.2.1. These will now be elucidated in the section below.

2.2.3.1. Positioning of therapeutic knowledge in counselling psychology as a struggle for the trainee

In learning to become a counselling psychologist an expectation exists that competence will be achieved through the acquisition of knowledge and therapeutic skills. Acquiring competence in counselling psychology is however not straightforward with McLeod (2004) describing a tension between the role of theory and counselling practice. The complexity of pluralistic practice is

echoed by McAteer (2010 p. 8) who states that those adopting this approach 'are not always in comfortable territory'; it requires the ability to tolerate divergent theories. This draws attention to pluralism which as a defining feature of a post-modern attitude eschews the possibility of any single theoretical, epistemological or methodological approach as superior. Counselling psychology is embedded in a post-modern philosophy; Rizq (2006, p. 614) notes that the pluralistic approach which underpins this stance is a source of 'considerable emotional strain for trainees'. These difficulties can be further understood when reference is made to the drive towards competence emphasised by the Health Professions Council (HPC, 2010) where trainees are required to demonstrate proficiency. Therefore the need for trainees to become competent collides with the sceptical starting point assumed during counselling psychology training in relation to theory (Rizq, 2006), subsequently leading to high levels of anxiety.

These positions therefore highlight the difficulties trainees experience in balancing the demand for demonstrating competence whilst assuming a pluralistic value base. This value base identifies multiple answers to issues of practice with no one way of experiencing, valuing and knowing regarded as superior. On the basis of these points, the pluralistic value base converging with the drive towards demonstrating competence can be seen as a potential source of anxiety. However what is required is a fuller understanding of this process specifically in relation to how it affects the acquisition of therapeutic skills required to become a counselling psychologist.

2.2.3.2. Expectations as a source of anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist

The prevalence of anxiety during the professional training programme is informed by qualitative research on the expectations of trainees. Pica (1998) reflecting on his own training emphasised the role of ambiguity inherent in therapeutic work as an important factor in anxiety experienced by trainees. Additionally Skovholt and Rønnestad (2003, p. 53) theorised on the basis of previous empirical work using grounded theory, that the ambiguous nature of therapeutic work

and 'glamorised expectations' were implicated in the pervasive anxieties experienced by trainee counsellors. Truell (2001) identified unrealistic expectations as a major source of anxiety in learning to become a counsellor. Trainees believed that the application of psychotherapeutic skills would have a curative effect on clients; when this did not bear out in reality they experienced disappointment. However limitations are noted in relation to the grounded theory methodology used by Truell (2001) and Skovholt and Rønnestad (2003). Both Truell (2001) and Skovholt and Rønnestad (2003) applied grounded theory methods proposed by Strauss and Corbin (1990). This approach adopts a realist ontology (Willig, 2008), with problems arising from the underlying assumption that the world can be discovered through the correct use of techniques (Willig, 2008). These studies are however valuable in drawing attention to the role of expectations and ambiguities as possible factors involved in the experience of anxiety during the training process; this has implications for the current study. It is therefore demonstrated that through the use of qualitative research, which is the approach used in the current study, that important insights can be elicited relating to anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist.

2.3. The conceptualisation of becoming a counselling psychologist and its implication for anxiety

In this section the notion of becoming will be considered especially as it relates to the development into a counselling psychologist. The changes which take place will be considered in relation to anxiety. Changes are seen as taking place within the broader framework of personal and professional development which inform how learning and becoming a counselling psychologist are conceptualised. General developmental models found within psychology will be briefly delineated as a means of grounding the discussion on counsellor development models. Counsellor and psychotherapist development models will be presented which explore themes taking place within the developmental process; how anxiety is implicated in this process will be considered. The convention of separating out personal and professional development will be maintained for reasons of clarity. However it is explicitly recognised that these two

aspects comprise a Gestalt of experiences and are inter-related (Donati & Watts, 2005, Johns, 1996).

2.3.1. Becoming and changing into a counselling psychologist as anxiety provoking

This study is interested in defining what constitutes the changes which take place in becoming a counselling psychologist. The notion of *becoming* requires some clarification specifically in relation to how it is used in the current study. The Oxford Companion to Philosophy (2005) defines 'becoming' as 'change; process; time'. Change is an important concept in the psychotherapy process generally and more specifically in the process of training to become a counselling psychologist. This assertion is supported by Alred (2006) who notes that the training period is one of intense self-exploration and change. However change is an ambiguous term and lacks clear definition (Carey, Carey, Mullan, Murray & Spratt, 2006). Apter (1999) conceptualises change in the following way which clarifies how change may be experienced by trainees in becoming a counselling psychologist, as follows:

Change could be called 'ex-change', for it is equivalent to a series of processes of negotiation-internal and external, the main characteristics of which are more or less the following: the reassessment of several equilibriums which have been internalised. Taking into account the past, present and our anticipation of the future. The intention to reactualise our equilibriums in an acceptable or even more so, in a satisfactory manner. The active desire to keep what we appreciate within ourselves. The letting go of that which we no longer want within ourselves. The putting into place that which seems to suit us. (p.68-69)

Although this definition does not focus directly on the change which occurs in the training process, some of the general features are useful for considering what constitutes training to become a counselling psychologist as approached in this study. The process of training to become a counsellor is described by Alred (2006) as a process of change which is painful and anxiety-provoking. This position is reiterated by Dryden and Thorne (1991, p. 3) who state that

'if things go well they will not go smoothly' which may resonate with the difficulties trainees experience in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Therefore it is suggested that the changes which take place in training to become a counselling psychologist are anxiety provoking. The nature of the changes which are associated with training to become a counselling psychologist are described below.

2.3.2. Personal and professional development

Personal and professional development are considered to be the main areas of growth for trainee counselling psychologists during the training process. This position is reiterated by Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) who describe these two strands as constituting the broad process of counsellor development. In the section below professional development will be discussed in the light of the learning processes which take place during training. These processes are considered to be involved in the anxiety trainees experience in learning the skills required to become a counselling psychologist. Following from this the aspects which are associated with personal development will be discussed in the light of anxiety and how this impacts on trainees.

2.3.2.1. Professional development and anxiety in becoming a counselling psychologist

Professional development is concerned with the extension of skills and knowledge (Wilkins, 1997). This implies that learning and the acquisition of skills and knowledge is an important part of developing as a counselling psychologist. The Counselling Psychology Course Accreditation booklet published by the BPS (2010, p.13-17) identifies learning outcomes which include i) developing and understanding the philosophical bases which underpin the counselling psychology profession and psychological theories more generally, ii) developing knowledge and the ability to work in at least one specific therapeutic model with working knowledge of one other model, iii) furthering already acquired psychological theories (gained in undergraduate psychology degree) including the use of psychological tests and understanding of psychopharmacology, iv) developing research skills through conducting research and acquiring

knowledge of different research designs and v) awareness of and continuous application of ethical principles to work. The importance of personal development is highlighted as an important learning outcome with an awareness of personal issues required. Although these guidelines offer clarity around what is to be expected during the training course there is a concern that professional development in counselling psychology is conceptualised according to a narrow set of competencies which are better suited towards academia than clinical excellence. Martin (2010, p. 559) describes the professional doctorate in counselling psychology as highly prescriptive and arcane which may not be best suited to the 'gentle art of counselling psychology'. Of relevance to this study is how these learning outcomes which involve extending experience and skills associated with the practice of counselling psychology affect trainees during the process of becoming.

Professional development involves the acquisition of knowledge which can be applied to the therapeutic context (Wilkins, 1997). Experiential learning (Kolb, 1984) is the learning process most frequently associated with the practice element of learning to become a counselling psychologist. This position is reiterated by Martin (2010) who states that learning through practice is a significant learning process in becoming a counselling psychologist; this involves learning through doing. A definition of this type of learning is that 'learning is a process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience' (Kolb, 1984, p. 38). This statement implies that learning through experience requires the learner to be actively engaged in the process. In this regard Criticos (1993, p. 161) states that '[e]xperience has to be arrested, examined, analysed. Considered and negated to shift it to knowledge'. This fuller engagement with experience as a means of learning suggests that emotions may be involved. This argument is extended by Heron (1990) who contends that valid knowledge depends on, and emerges from openness to feeling. Therefore these perspectives suggest that for learning to take place, a requirement exists to engage fully with the environment and that openness to emotions are involved for valid knowledge to develop. These perspectives have implications for the current study as they suggest that emotions, which may include anxiety is involved in the process of transforming experience into knowledge in becoming a counselling psychologist.

The importance of reflection in counselling psychology is noted by Corrie and Lane (2001) with the BPS (2004, 2009) and the HPC (2010) confirming the centrality of reflection in applied psychology practice. Reflection-in-action is noted by Schön (1983, 1987) to be facilitative of learning. Schön (1983) notes additionally that it is an important source of developing competence in professional practice involving change through active experimentation. However according to Harris (1989) Schön's model neglects the importance of a knowledge base which informs reflection-in-action. The significance of reflection is highlighted by Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992); they considered it to be a central developmental process, consisting of intense professional and personal experiences. However despite emphasising the importance of reflection in developing therapeutic expertise very little empirical evidence is available which supports its use in learning (Bennett-Levy, 2003). This suggests that the role of reflection in developing therapeutic competence is a complex phenomenon which requires further research especially in learning to become a counselling psychologist.

Becoming a reflexive practitioner is difficult (Martin, 2010). However, if the commitment made to clients is the use of self, then reflection on self and the use of self-knowledge in the therapeutic enterprise is critically important. Ward and House (1998, p, 25) identify reflective learning as requiring the trainee to focus on a 'troubling situation' as a means of raising awareness; for these authors the experience of uncertainty and dissonance are viewed as requirements for reflective learning. Hycner (1993) elaborates on this by emphasising the importance of the therapist struggling with their woundedness specifically as a means of developing the self of the therapist. What this suggests is that learning to become a counselling psychologist involves reflecting on self and using this knowledge of self in therapeutic work; therefore the whole person of the therapist which includes vulnerabilities is involved. In this regard learning to become a counselling psychologist involves more than the acquisition of therapeutic knowledge and skills, instead it requires an authentic use of self (Rowan and Jacobs, 2002), which is used in a reflective and disciplined way. However this process which Rowan and Jacobs (2002, p. 109) describe as moving in the direction of personal knowledge and away from an over-reliance

on 'sacred texts' can be thought of as presenting particular challenges to trainees. This becomes evident especially as Ward and House (1998) assert that novice counsellors are already struggling with feelings of anxiety and confusion as a result of the reflective learning process. Therefore the aforementioned perspectives suggest that reflection on self is a prerequisite for the authentic and therapeutic use of self; this may however be implicated in the experience of anxiety which trainee counselling psychologists experience.

2.3.2.2. Personal development and anxiety in becoming a counselling psychologist

Personal development is one of the central pillars constituting the developmental process in counselling training. Johns (1996, p. 40) defines it as, 'personal development is about the ways in which we learn and change, and that any change in knowledge, skills, attitudes or awareness, usually influences the whole person'. This definition identifies change as a central process with this experience previously noted by Alred (2006) as giving rise to anxiety. The importance of personal development in counselling psychology is confirmed in the Guidance for Counselling Psychology Programmes published by the BPS (2010). This guidance states that trainees should be systematically involved in personal development work as a means of understanding personal issues. Personal development is often seen as the most significant part of counsellor training whilst at the same time being the least well defined (Johns, 1996). This conceptual fuzziness is noted by Williams and Irving (1996) as creating ethical as well as practical problems for trainees. Rizq (2010) adds to this by stating that the lack of clarity around personal development can be seen as a source of confusion for trainees especially in relation to identifying aims and outcomes to be achieved during the training process. As a consequence the lack of clarity around the constituents of personal development appears to be involved in the uncertainty trainee counselling psychologists experience. This has important implications for this study as an association appears to be suggested between the uncertainty around what constitutes personal development and the experience of anxiety.

Reflection is a central means of achieving learning and growth in counselling psychology. Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) identify continuous reflection to be a central developmental process. To further understand how development occurs, Mearns (1997) developed a three-stage model describing the process of personal development which Donati and Watts (2005) who are both counselling psychologists compared to Kolb's (1984) model of experiential learning. In this model reflection is emphasised as a central means of achieving new understandings. Hammersley (2003) who is a counselling psychologist identifies the importance of critical reflexivity as both an intellectual activity and one involving affective elements; she notes that trainees require support to manage this during the personal development process. In this regard, the significance of emotions in the learning process is reiterated by Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993). The process of reflecting on self which is emphasised in the reflective learning model is noted by Ward and House (1998) to be stressful. Whilst Alred (2006) found that self-reflection and the evaluation which arises from this can be experienced as confusing, painful and unsettling. Therefore it can be seen that the process of self-reflection which is part of the personal development agenda for trainees involves emotions and gives rise to anxiety and discomfort. On the basis of the aforementioned points, critical self-reflection is therefore identified as a possible factor implicated in the experience of anxiety in training to become a counselling psychologist.

Self-awareness can be viewed as both a goal of personal development (Connor, 1994, Johns, 1996, Mearns, 1997) and a tool which enables development to take place (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1996). The BPS (2009) requires a high level of self-awareness which informs the use of self in clinical work. Donati and Watts (2005) note however that self-awareness is not well-defined which has the potential to cause confusion for trainees specifically in relation to defining the goals of personal development. Bayne, Horton, Merry and Noyes (1994, p. 136) outline a model of self-awareness which consists of three constituents, namely: 1). inner self-awareness which involves awareness of the individual's thoughts, emotions, intuitions, fantasies; 2). self-knowledge which refers to personality traits, personal values, attitudes and interests; and 3). outer self-awareness which involves the individual's awareness of their own

behaviour and how they might be perceived by others. Therefore what the aforementioned points suggest is that self-awareness is of critical importance to both personal development and clinical work. However a potential difficulty arises for trainees as the term 'self-awareness' is vague and ambiguous.

It is assumed that to achieve a high degree of self-awareness requires introspection and reflection. Jenson (1995) identifies self-examination as a necessity in professional training but considers this to be a source of considerable pressure. For the person-centred counsellor in training self-awareness is crucial (Mearns & Thorne, 2007) and remains a key activity throughout professional life. However these authors suggest that despite it being a painful process it is important because it underpins the ability to be authentic especially in the therapeutic relationship (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). These positions are of interest to the current study as they draw attention to the pain involved in developing self-awareness which may be an important part of anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Additionally authenticity is suggested to play a part in self-awareness which may have an impact on how development and becoming takes place for trainee counselling psychologists.

Personal development links in with the personal qualities of the trainee and implies attributes, authenticity and interpersonal engagement (Rizq, 2010). Jennings and Skovholt (1999) identify authenticity as one of the key attributes of master therapists. In the literature authenticity has also been referred to as congruence however the term 'authenticity' is preferred because of its existential connotations which support the philosophical position of this study. The term 'congruence' typically has a more specific focus and is associated with the person-centred epistemology. In the discussion below where authors have specifically used the term 'congruence' this convention will be respected.

The Greek word for 'auth-éntes' refers to the 'author' and could be taken to refer to somebody who does something by their own hand (Duden, 1963). The centrality of choice is noted in this

definition especially in relation to clinical practice. Writing on personal development Rizq (2006, p. 620) suggests that critical self-reflection allows for greater personal choice and responsibility in relation to theoretical and clinical work. Congruence and authenticity are complex concepts with Rogers identifying congruence as a way of being (Brazier, 1993) whilst Tudor and Worrall (1994) identify it as a skill which can be developed personally and professionally. This latter position ties in with the existential literature which identifies self-awareness as a developmental achievement (Kierkegaard, 1844/ 1980). For him self-awareness is seen as an individual's awakening into self-consciousness (Kierkegaard, 1844/ 1980). In studying doctoral counselling psychology trainees Nutt-Williams et al, (1997) found that trainees experienced anxiety in relation to incongruence. This finding was confirmed by research conducted by Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) which identified authenticity as a developmental achievement. It is therefore suggested that becoming authentic is implicated in the developmental process and is related to anxiety. As a result this extends the argument of the current study to include authenticity as a factor possibly related to anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist.

2.3.4. Models of how the trainee develops professionally into a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety

The development of counsellors and psychotherapists has been studied with reference to developmental models identifying factors and themes implicated in the growth process. General developmental models in psychology will be briefly discussed in the section below as a means of grounding the analysis on counsellor development models. Models of counsellor development will be critically considered in relation to anxiety.

Counsellor development models have generally been informed by developmental models found within psychology such as Freud's (1905/2000) psychosexual development and Erikson's (1980) theory of psychosocial development. The models of counsellor development formulated by Friedman and Kaslow (1986) and Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992b) are influenced by both Freud and Erikson whilst other models such as those developed by Yogev (1982) and Grater

(1985) implicitly ascribe to assumptions of trainees moving towards higher levels of growth; this is in keeping with Maslow's (1943) motivational theory. Maslow (1943) who was heavily influenced by the existential and phenomenological traditions proposed a hierarchy of needs which viewed individuals as progressing from lower to higher levels; the latter was associated with greater individual growth. For Maslow (1970) psychological health was synonymous with emotional maturity, self-actualisation and authenticity. He made a significant contribution by identifying a positive theory of human motivation and growth which offered a contrast to the prevailing Freudian 'pessimism' (Hoffman, 1988) of the time. However a shortcoming of these developmental models is that they can be viewed as judgemental (Neher, 1991). In particular a predetermined framework provides a means of judging whether one is on the 'correct path' to achieving these higher stages with lower stages implicitly assumed to be inferior. In this way these models appear to make judgments about what is preferable and that which is inferior in relation to achieving growth.

Assumptions which are made in developmental theories impact on how growth and development is conceptualised. Limitations of the aforementioned developmental theories relate to biological assumptions made that development follows a typical pattern of growth-maintenance-decline (Sugarman, 2001). This implies that development is forward-moving towards an end-state which can be definitively achieved at which point decline is inevitable. However what is neglected in these theories and is of relevance to the current study is the notion of becoming as an ongoing process with this understanding implicated in the use of self. This position is emphasised in the person-centred tradition which suggests that work on the self can never be complete (Mearns & Thorne, 2007). This underpins a crucial point in person-centred theory namely that human beings have a basic drive to maintain and enhance their functioning. This accords with tenets of life-span development where development is viewed as ongoing and multidimensional (Sugarman, 2001, 2010). Therefore the view of growth as an ongoing process and as a requirement for the use of self in counselling psychology raises interesting questions for the current study specifically in relation to how growth is conceived of in the therapeutic use of self.

Most models of counsellor development have been formulated by supervisors and have almost exclusively tended to focus on professional development. Grater (1985) formulated a model of psychotherapist development based on his observations and role as a supervisor. He identified themes of psychotherapist professional development based on increasingly complex topics brought to supervision by trainees. Four stages were proposed which included the development of basic therapeutic skills and the adoption of the role of therapist. Progression was seen through the trainee's increasing ability to select appropriate interventions and the greater use of self in assessment and interventions (Grater, 1985). He identified that anxiety was a normative feature of learning to become a therapist. This view has important implications for the current study in relation to the role anxiety has in the use of self during the process of becoming a counselling psychologist.

The model of trainee development formulated by Ward and House (1998) is based on supervisor's accounts and is described by the authors as a reflective learning model. They identified pervasive anxiety at the novice stage arising from the disjuncture between clinical skills and academic understanding (Ward & House, 1998). This model is significant as it emphasises reflective learning as a means of growth and development. In this regard reflective practice is noted as a distinguishing feature of counselling psychology (Lane & Corrie, 2006). Ward and House's (1998) research converges with the interests of the current study by suggesting that learning to become a counselling psychologist involves anxiety and that reflection may be facilitative of growth. However a limitation of this model and Grater's (1985) model is that they are based on supervisor's accounts and are developed on the basis of supervision sessions with trainees. It is possible that trainee's thoughts and reflections on how they experienced growth and development into counsellors or psychotherapists are not adequately reflected as a result. The current study aims to address this shortcoming through obtaining detailed accounts from trainees of their experiences of learning to become a counselling psychologist.

Models of therapist and counsellor development are concerned with how professional identity is constructed during the training process. Friedman and Kaslow (1986) formulated a six stage model of professional identity development based on psychodynamic principles. They identified the development of a stable and coherent 'healer identity' (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986, p. 31) as a major goal of training; it was suggested that this identity provided the trainee with a sense of stability. For these authors development is seen as a progression from a state of diffuse anxiety through to a gradual reduction giving rise to a sense of calmness. Greater professional autonomy, an internalised frame of reference and an ability to integrate theoretical and clinical material are identified as indicative of growth and development. The model developed by Friedman and Kaslow (1986) draws attention to anxiety as a normative experience during training to become a counsellor with experiential learning taking place once anxiety levels have diminished. However due to the assumptions Friedman and Kaslow (1986) make around avoidance of ambiguity and the development of a stable 'healer identity' they appear to be located within a modernist position. In contrast to this position Loewenthal and Snell (2003) identify a postmodern attitude as favouring uncertainty over generalisation and questioning over received wisdom or established authority. Despite this, the findings of Friedman and Kaslow's (1986) findings are important to the current study in relation to two areas namely by confirming the prevalence of anxiety in the developmental process and that becoming a counselling psychologist involves learning through doing (Martin, 2010).

An influential model which focuses on professional development and spans the entire career of psychotherapists was identified by Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992b). An eight stage model of professional development was formulated by these authors on the basis of common themes in the narratives of psychotherapists at varying points in their careers. The findings are significant to the current study for the following reasons. A potential source of anxiety was identified as the confrontation with a number of theories and eclectic approaches. This raises interesting questions for the current study specifically in relation to the possibility that the pluralistic value base of counselling psychology can be a potential source of anxiety for trainees. Additionally Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992b) research highlights that development is associated with

greater authenticity. This is important for the current study as it suggests a possibility that authenticity may be linked to the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Additionally Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992b) found continuous professional reflection to be central to the development and learning process. This finding is relevant to the current study which assumes that becoming a counselling psychologist is underpinned by reflection. Limitations of Skovholt and Rønnestad's (1992b) study are noted in relation to the methodology used. Specifically researcher reflexivity is not addressed in their study which obscures how the researcher's subjectivity influenced the findings. As a result a positivist epistemology appears to be subscribed to in this study with the assumption that the researcher is detached and an objective observer of reality. This research however opens up important areas for the current study in relation to the prevalence of anxiety in the training process whilst linking the process of becoming with reflective learning and authenticity.

2.4. CONCLUSION

The struggles which trainees experience when embarking on professional training are understood as anxiety-provoking. A significant body of research confirms that anxiety is associated with the training experience. Anxiety occurs in relation to the expectations held that training and the acquisition of professional knowledge and skills will be sufficient to successfully manage the ambiguities and uncertainties of therapeutic practice. The development of the trainee is considered in relation to the commitment counselling psychology makes to pluralism with this understood as potentially giving rise to high levels of anxiety in trainees becoming counselling psychologists. The notion of anxiety experienced by trainees is positioned within the main traditions informing counselling psychology which highlight the centrality of this experience in development, self-awareness and authenticity.

Becoming a counselling psychologist is a process of change. Development of counselling psychologists is framed within the broader categories of professional and personal development. The literature suggests that specific learning outcomes and processes associated

with personal and professional development are implicated in the anxiety trainees experience during the training process. Becoming a counselling psychologist is constituted by the learning process which centres on increasing self-awareness and reflection. The literature identifies anxiety as an important experience in authenticity in training to become a counsellor; this links in with existential thought. Counsellor development models are informed by stage theories of development and posit growth increasing predominately in professional development. It is suggested that development occurs through continuing reflection. In the next chapter the methodology used to investigate the process of becoming a counselling psychologist will be explicated.

3.1. INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the method used to answer the research question of how trainee counselling psychologists experience the process of becoming through the lens of anxiety. The epistemological and philosophical considerations which informed the decision to use an existential-empirical phenomenological approach will be discussed. The research plan, design and procedures used for data analysis will be delineated in this chapter. The structure and order in which topics will be presented in this chapter are as follows: the rationale underpinning the choice to use an existential-empirical phenomenological approach, an outline of the philosophical phenomenology perspectives that inform the analytic interests of this study, a discussion evaluating the contributions and some of the limitations of the existential-empirical approach will be provided and finally a discussion of the analytic steps of the existential empirical phenomenological method which was employed.

3.2. Rationale for using an Existential-Empirical Phenomenological Approach

Phenomenology is located within a qualitative paradigm which is generally interested in meaning. Phenomenology has been applied in a meaningful way to scientifically study phenomena as lived and experienced. However it should be acknowledged that the empirical phenomenological approach can be seen as one of many possible alternatives to studying the phenomenon of interest. In this section the motivations for the use of an empirical existential-phenomenological approach for studying the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist in relation to *anxiety* will be provided. This is discussed with reference to the *philosophy* of existential-phenomenology which links in with the concerns of this investigation. Further grounds for the use of this approach are provided in the discussion on the empirical-existential phenomenological *research method* developed by Giorgi (1985). Additional support is offered through citing studies by other researchers in the field investigating related phenomena.

The *philosophical* tenets of existential-phenomenology can be seen to complement the phenomena under investigation in this study. There are several grounds which support the use of an existential-phenomenological framework in studying the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* which are as follows: Firstly, a link between *becoming* and existential thought is posited on the basis of the etymological foundation of the Latin word *existere* which means 'to stand out, to *become* [emphasis added], or to emerge' (Misiak & Sexton, 1973, p. 72); the association between existential thought and the process of *becoming* is noticeable in this definition. Secondly, an existential-phenomenological approach is relational emphasising the interconnectedness of the person in interaction with the world (Finlay, 2009). In this regard counselling psychology promotes the relational stance (Manafi, 2010) which provides further support for the use of an existential phenomenological approach. Thirdly, *anxiety* is noted as ubiquitous in existential phenomenological thought (Fischer, 1971, Kirby, 2004, Wulfin, 2008) with Van Deurzen (1997) suggesting that anxiety occurs through becoming aware of human limitations leading to greater authenticity. In 'On becoming a person' Rogers (1961) emphasises growth through acknowledging freedom to define meaning for oneself. Therefore the treatment of *anxiety* and *becoming* in existential-phenomenology intersecting with the growth process noted by Rogers (1961) offers support for the use of this approach in studying how trainees become counselling psychologists.

The empirical-existential phenomenological approach is a scientific *method* used to study issues of concern to existentialism and phenomenology. Giorgi (2003) took the insights of phenomenology as a philosophy and developed it into a rigorous phenomenological method. This method was developed to elucidate situations of interest to psychology from the perspective of scientific psychology. The rationale for using an empirical-existential phenomenological method to investigate the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* are as follows: Firstly, previous research on counsellor development constructs development as occurring in a predictable way in stages (Friedman & Kaslow, 1986, Loganbill, et al, 1982, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992) with anxiety conceived of as pathological

(Brooks, et al, 2002, Cushway, 1992, Nutt-Williams et al, 1997). These studies were identified as presenting reductionist views on the process of developing into a psychologist with reference to the experience of anxiety. Milton, Craven and Coyle (2010) recommend the use of phenomenological methods to explore disorders to overcome reductionist explanations of human distress. As a consequence the current study attempts to respond to this recommendation. The method developed by Giorgi (1985) allows for new meanings to occur in investigating the phenomena of *becoming* a counselling psychologist through the lens of *anxiety*. Crotty (1998) concurs with this and describes the phenomenological method as able to enhance former meanings. Therefore through the application of an existential phenomenological approach to the study of *becoming* especially with reference to *anxiety* an attempt is made to move away from reductionist conceptualisations of this phenomenon and to contribute to an extension of former meanings.

Other researchers have applied Giorgi's (1985) method in a meaningful way to phenomena related to the current area under investigation. In conducting a phenomenological study into anxiety and obtaining first person accounts of this experience Fischer (1971, 1989) found that anxiety represented a particular way of being-in-the-world. Through emphasising anxiety taking place in interaction with the world Fischer (1971, 1989) moved towards an intersubjective understanding of self and the world. Fischer's (1971, 1989) approach was therefore in keeping with what Manafi (2010) highlights as counselling psychology's commitment to conceptualising human beings in relation to the world and others; this provided further support for the use of Giorgi's (1985) method. Shertock (1998) used a phenomenological approach to study Latin American women's experience of moving towards and realising a meaningful goal. This research implied the possibility of a similar process at work in moving towards becoming a counselling psychologist and that it could be amenable to a phenomenological exploration. As a consequence of using Giorgi's (1985) method, the previously cited studies elucidated new meanings and demonstrated a commitment to subjectivity and the relational which are priorities in the counselling psychology profession; this provided further grounds for the use of this method for the current area under investigation.

3.3. Epistemological considerations

In this section the focus will be on delineating the epistemological basis as it relates to the empirical-existential phenomenological approach used in this study. The manner in which the term 'epistemology' is used and understood in this study is informed by Cayne (2005, p. 115). She states that it is 'concerned with the grounds on which knowledge is legitimated.' Areas of difference between a positivist and existential phenomenological epistemology are noted through highlighting distinctions between Human and Natural Sciences, with the value of description and the notion of co-constitutionality emphasised as significant in how knowledge is constructed.

The epistemological position taken in this study has important implications for the analytic method used. Madill, Jordan and Shirley (2000) identify three broad epistemological positions occurring on a continuum namely: realist, contextual constructionist and radical constructionist. This research locates itself within a broadly contextual constructionist position. For Crotty (1998) this position assumes that all meaningful reality occurs and is constructed in the interaction between human beings and their world. In this study it is assumed that both the researcher and the co-researcher are conscious beings acting on and interpreting their world. The inevitability of the researcher bringing their own personal and cultural perspectives to bear on the research process is highlighted. As a result the researcher's reflexivity is emphasised, this can be seen in Boxes 2 and 3 which are found in a later section. In keeping with a constructionist view the empirical phenomenological method understands that the world is interpreted in a taken-for-granted way which Husserl (1977) described as the natural attitude. Therefore methods such as epoché or bracketing are used to counteract the biases this stance may create. Contextualism highlights that all knowledge is local and situation dependent with Coyle (2007) stating that context becomes a constituent of whatever it is that is being researched. As a consequence data will vary as a function of the context in which it is elicited and analysed and as a result of the interaction between the participant and the researcher.

A further epistemological distinction can be made between the Natural and Human Sciences with phenomenological approaches located within the Human Science paradigm. Dilthey (Spinelli, 2005, p. 128 cites Hodges, 1952) first proposed a distinction between these two sciences stating that each required different methodologies. The former are based on explanation as found in traditional psychology and the latter on intuitive understanding and description favoured by phenomenological psychology. In the Natural Sciences methods have been developed which are suited to the study of the natural world; this includes the search for causal explanations by reducing phenomena to quantifiable elements. However in psychology which is interested in the study of humans such methods are not appropriate as they distort experienced phenomena (Giorgi, 1985). In this regard Kaye (1995) discusses the impact methods taken from the Natural Science have had on psychotherapy research; this has led to phenomena being misrepresented and removed from holistic, contextual factors. Gillett (1995, p. 112) argues that the Human Science view involves investigative activity designed to 'get inside the forms of life and the socially normative regularities in which the person's activity has taken shape... requiring an empathic and imaginative identification with the subject.' The notion of the detached, objective researcher which is favoured in a positivist epistemology is eschewed by phenomenology. Therefore existential phenomenological psychology locates itself within a Human Science view and by using methods within this approach attempts to understand the human condition more adequately as it occurs in concrete experience.

A further distinction is found in psychological research specifically around the use of explanation as opposed to description. All qualitative approaches share a commitment to understanding meaning within textual material (Madill, et al. 2000) and in providing nuanced accounts that do justice to the experience of the participants (McLeod, 2001). The objective of qualitative research as defined by Willig (2008, p. 8) 'is to *describe* and possibly explain events and experiences but never to predict'. In the descriptive phenomenological approach advocated by Giorgi (1985) there is an emphasis on the description of experience as a means of remaining faithful to the phenomena of lived experience. A phenomenological analysis of

descriptions is considered by Giorgi (1985) to be different in style and character but equal in value to those in quantitative approaches. However despite the widespread use of descriptive results in science objections against description are raised on the basis that this type of raw data is open to distortions (Giorgi, 1985). Therefore to overcome this potential source of error and to more accurately depict an objective reality, surveys or questionnaires are proposed by positivistic epistemology. However it is suggested that the imposition of predefined theoretical constructs used within experimental designs based on standard natural science approaches to phenomena may lead to the full meaning and richness of an experience to be distorted or lost. In countering the trend towards reductionist explanations Churchill and Wertz (2001) note that the phenomenological approach which employs techniques such as imaginative variation and epoché allows for a better understanding of the human condition as concretely experienced to be achieved. As a consequence of the limitations of a positivistic epistemology in faithfully describing human experience as lived, phenomenology offers a means of more adequately investigating phenomena through the use of descriptive techniques.

There are significant differences in how reality and experience are understood when positioned in a positivist epistemology or a contextual constructionist epistemology which is where existential phenomenology is located. Throughout history psychology has according to Wertz (1985) recognised itself as a science of experience. However through aligning itself with positivism, traditional psychology assumed that natural objects exist and are reflected back to the passive recipient through sense data. Existential phenomenology assumes a contrasting position based on different epistemological assumptions. Phenomenology asserts that the world only emerges through our reflection on it which is in keeping with a constructionist epistemology. In phenomenology experience is described by Polkinghorne (1989) as consisting of the reception of worldly objects into consciousness which acts in such a manner that it constitutes that which appears in consciousness. The existential phenomenologist speaks of the indissoluble unity between the person and the world. This notion of co-constitutionality will be elaborated further in section 3.4.2 however of importance here is the idea that the human individual is fully contextualised and that the meaning of existence emerges through interaction

with the world. Valle, et al, (1989) assert that this total interdependency is based on a dialogical relationship where the world and the individual are in dialogue. In this way the context is considered to be of primary importance in constituting experience with the person playing an active role in meaning making. Therefore of relevance to the knowledge claims which are made in this study a contextual constructionist epistemology asserts that knowledge is provisional with results varying according to the context in which the data is collected and analysed. Through using an empirical existential phenomenological approach to studying the process of *becoming* a provisional description of how this experience is understood will be put forward which is informed by a contextual constructionist epistemology.

3.4. Theoretical perspective.

In this section foundational principles in philosophical phenomenology and existential phenomenology will be discussed as a means of elucidating some of the ontological assumptions of how the phenomenon of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* is understood. In this study ontology is taken to refer to the nature of the world and asks 'what is there to know' (Willig, 2008, p. 13). Philosophical and existential phenomenology are theoretical perspectives which inform the methodology used in this study. 'Theoretical perspective' is defined by Crotty (1998, p. 3) as 'an approach to understanding and explaining society and the human world and grounds a set of assumptions that [existential phenomenologists] bring to their methodology'. In philosophical phenomenology consciousness, intentionality and 'noema-noesis' (Husserl, 1931a; 1931b) will be discussed as important concepts grounding how the phenomena under investigation are understood.

3.4.1. Philosophical Phenomenology

Consciousness is a foundational concept in phenomenology. The phenomenological perspective is aimed at providing a description of things as they appear which allow for a sufficient understanding of human consciousness and experience to be achieved (Valle et al, 1989). Edmund Husserl is considered by Spinelli (2005) and Churchill and Wertz (2001) to be

the founder of phenomenology; his aim was to develop a science based on how objects are experienced and appear in consciousness. Husserl's position is seen as counter to the assumptions made by positivism specifically the notion of an objective reality where real things are assumed to exist outside of conscious awareness (Giorgi, 1997). This critique of objective reality can be seen as the starting point for phenomenological inquiry with the possibility of what is considered to be real inextricably bound up with our interpretative processes. In phenomenology there is an emphasis on identifying, understanding and maintaining the subjective experiences of the co-researchers. Through the techniques of epoche and imaginative variation insight into the phenomenon under investigation can be arrived at. The significance of phenomenology for the current investigation is that through using the methods identified by Husserl a clearer understanding of the meaning attached to *becoming* a counselling psychologist can be elucidated.

In phenomenology intentionality is a foundational concept which informed how the phenomenon of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* was conceptualised. Husserl (1931a; 1931b) spoke of the inter-relationship between reality and consciousness with the nature of the person-world relationship described by the concept of 'intentionality'. He posited that a direct relationship with things was not possible because of the intentional relationship human beings have with the world. Instead of seeing things in the world as they really are the world is interpreted according to conceptual schemas, theoretical biases and previous involvement which prevent direct access to the things. This is described as the natural attitude and to attempt a description of the phenomenon there is a requirement that these meanings be bracketed; therefore what remains in consciousness is *some thing*. Spinelli (2005) suggests that the 'thing' which remains is the invariant relationship between the world and conscious experience of it. Intentionality is an important concept in this study as it overcomes the Cartesian split between subject and object through positing that the subject and object co-constitute or bring meaning to one another (Ihde, 1998). Therefore the notion of intentionality is of relevance to this study as it offers a means of understanding the features which constitute the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist through the lens of

anxiety. The trainee counselling psychologist is seen as being in an intentional relationship with the environment and others through which meaning is created.

Husserl (1931a, 1931b) suggested that every act of intentionality consisted of two points of reference namely the noematic - noetic focus of intentionality. Moustakas (1994) identifies these concepts as constituting the dual foci of phenomenological research; noema is the object towards which individuals direct their attention and noesis is the mode of experiencing. The noema-noesis foci are relevant to the current investigation as they draw attention to two poles of experiencing within the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist and the experience of *anxiety*. The unique (noetic) adds meaning to *becoming* a counselling psychologist and *anxiety* with the noematic correlate seen as the content or that which is perceived in the process of *becoming* for instance learning or the training course. The minimization of one pole of experiencing over the other is noted by Spinelli (2005, p.18) as a characteristic of traditional psychology which this study will attempt to overcome by emphasising both the unique experiential variables and the 'some thing' which is the focus of attention. Therefore through studying the intentional relationship which takes place in the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* the underlying meaning of this phenomenon can be discerned with greater clarity.

3.4.2. Existential phenomenological psychology

Existential phenomenology blends two complementary and inter-related perspectives namely existentialism and phenomenology and when applied to psychological phenomena is known as 'existential phenomenological psychology'. Valle et al, (1989) describe it as a discipline which explicates the essence, structure or form of human experience through descriptive techniques. Heidegger, who was a student of Husserl combined existential concerns with phenomenological methodology (Valle et al, 1989; Spinelli, 2005); this represented a move away from the pure phenomenology of Husserl. Existential thinkers such as Sartre, Merleau-Ponty and Kierkegaard addressed themselves to the experience of existence and aspects of

existence such as freedom and its limitations, temporality, engagement with the world and meaning/ meaninglessness. Insights from these writers led to a focus on situated human experience. As a result intentionality became redefined as a relational dynamic of self-other interaction (Von Eckartsberg, 1998). Existential-phenomenology therefore studies existence in terms of the individual's involvement in a situation in the world. Spiegelberg (1963, p.255) described the overarching aim of this approach as the 'awakening of a special way of life, usually called authentic existence'. Therefore the components of the existential phenomenological approach offer a means of investigating the situated experience of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with the meaning of this highlighted through the existential theme of *anxiety*.

Existential phenomenological psychology is ontological (Hoffman, 2009) and advocates a particular stance to reality. This informed the researcher's assumptions in relation to the world and the process of *becoming*. The notion of co-constitutionality is a foundational concept in existential phenomenological thought which Valle, et al. (1989) described as the indissoluble unity between the individual and their world. In this way the meaning of the individual's existence emerges through the environment whilst the individual's existence gives meaning to their world. Heidegger (1962) captures this relationship through the notion of 'being-in-the-world'; reflections around being are understood with reference to the indissoluble union between 'a being' and 'the world'. These propositions suggest that the individual trainee counselling psychologist is fully contextualised and that meaning is created through the interaction and dialogue with the world.

The concept of the life world (Valle, et al. 1989, Van Deurzen, 1997) draws attention to how the world is lived immediately and directly and is central to existential phenomenological thought. Meaning is generated through the dialogical relationship between the person and the environment (Valle et al. 1989). This relationship is referred to as the *Lebenswelt* (Husserl, 1936/1970) or life-world and is expressive of the lack of separation between the person and the external environment. The notion of a dialogical relationship between the world and individuals

draws attention to choice as it is understood existentially; each person has situated freedom (Valle, et al, 1989) with an obligation to choose from limited situations. This highlights a tension within existential phenomenology which Von Eckartsberg (1998, p. 15) describes as an 'existential-phenomenological paradox'; the unique and particular of existence as represented by existentialism and the universal and essential as noted by phenomenology. Human beings participate actively yet are also passively impacted on by the world with each person experiencing the relevance of the world in a unique way. This involvement is described by Churchill and Wertz (2001, p. 250) as 'projects' which allow individuals to make the world their own. Therefore the meaning of *becoming* a counselling psychologist and *anxiety* are uniquely constructed through the dialogical relationship with the world whilst recognising that general themes of existence structure experience.

3.5. Empirical Phenomenological Approach

This section will describe the amendments Giorgi (1985) made to Husserl's (1913/ 1983) philosophical phenomenological method. Giorgi's (1985) approach will be critically appraised in relation to the study of the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to the experience of anxiety.

Phenomenological psychology is informed by the insights of philosophical phenomenology and investigates methodically and in a rigorous way structures typical of groups of people. In maintaining the guiding theme of phenomenology to go 'back to the things themselves' (Husserl, 1970/1900, p. 252) psychological investigations informed by phenomenology describe the everyday world where phenomena are lived in actual situations. Human experience and behaviour are the focus of this type of approach. The approach draws on the philosophical insights of phenomenology and investigates those phenomena relevant to psychology. Phenomenological psychology is distinguished from philosophical phenomenology with the latter investigating structures universal and necessary for the appearance of consciousness. Self-reflection is associated with this latter approach and is described by Polkinghorne (1989,

p.43) as 'armchair philosophizing'; this is seen as a source of subjective bias (Giorgi, 1985). Phenomenological psychology therefore moves away from self-reflection as a source of data to interviewing research participants thereby conferring greater validity to the findings.

The empirical-existential phenomenological approach used in this study is based on the method developed by Giorgi (1985). Husserl's transcendental phenomenology was re-conceptualised by Giorgi (1985) to make it more amenable to psychology. Giorgi (2008) identified four core characteristics which are required for phenomenological investigations which Spinelli (2005, p. 22) describes as the 'phenomenological attitude'. This attitude was adopted in the current investigation and strips away interpretational layers (Spinelli, 2005) leading to a clearer understanding of the phenomenon of interest. Therefore the characteristics of the phenomenological attitude will be presented below. A detailed description of the analytic steps followed in the current study will be provided in section 3.7 which incorporates this attitude. The three characteristics developed by Husserl are as follows; 1) by means of epoché or the phenomenological reduction the researcher brackets all past assumptions and theoretical knowledge not based on direct intuition of the phenomenon of interest. Therefore the researcher's full attention is directed to the phenomenon as it appears in consciousness, 2) encountering an instance of the phenomenon through interviewing co-researchers with experience of the phenomenon of interest. Through imaginative variation and reflection the researcher determines the structure of the phenomenon, 3) a careful description of the structure based on the findings of the aforementioned steps (Husserl, 1983 cited by Giorgi, 2006, p. 345-355). Through the application of the phenomenological attitude important insights in relation to the phenomenon of interest are arrived at.

The notion of 'bracketing' or epochè is contentious and has significant implications. Bracketing was devised by Husserl (Wertz, 2005, p. 168) to counteract the 'natural attitude' whereby one takes the world for granted. With reference to the phenomenological reduction a question arises whether it is possible to remain completely free of presuppositions or biases. In this regard Moustakas (1994) identifies that habitual ways of perceiving continue to enter into

considerations of phenomena despite attempts to remain faithful to the principle of epoché. The requirement of epoché can however be thought of as inspiring one to examine and become aware of biases rather than as a pure state which can be achieved definitively. Crotty (1998) concurs with this position suggesting that things are still made sense of within a culturally derived meaning system which inevitably consists of presuppositions. Through becoming aware of theoretical biases a fuller meaning of the phenomenon can be arrived at. This position is in keeping with the contextual constructionist epistemological stance of this study where knowledge is assumed to be influenced by the perspective of the perceiver. Existential phenomenological researchers suggest that a perspectiveless position is impossible. This viewpoint is extended to the notion that an interconnected relationship exists between the researcher and that which is researched. However in the current study the use of bracketing is considered an important tool to reduce the possibility of the researcher over-identifying with the co-researchers due to the shared experience of becoming a counselling psychologist.

3.6. Existential Empirical Phenomenology as opposed to other qualitative methodologies

In identifying which approach would most adequately investigate the research question of the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* two phenomenological approaches were considered. Hermeneutic phenomenology and a Heuristic approach were considered; they are briefly discussed below in relation to the research question with reasons identified for why they were discarded.

Hermeneutics is a complex field which subscribes to a variety of different methodologies. The approach which was initially considered was from the Heideggerian – Gadamer tradition (Koch, 1996). In this approach critical analysis or explanation of a text is the manner in which the researcher is involved in generating meaning. This approach is grounded in the importance of interpretation with Heidegger (1962) asserting that nothing can be encountered without reference to the person's background and historicity. Gadamer (1960/ 1990) emphasised interpretation as a basic structure of our experience of life with preconceptions and

assumptions viewed as inevitable; these assumptions are used as part of the sense-making process. The notion of bracketing which is an intrinsic technique employed in empirical phenomenology is dismissed by Gadamer (1960/1990) as impossible. The epistemological position of this approach views knowledge as the co-creation between researcher and participant which was considered an advantage in the generation of meaning for the current investigation. However this approach was discarded for two reasons. Firstly because meaning is centred on readings, reflective writing and interpretation (Lavery, 2003) it was considered that the lived experience of the co-researcher would be marginalised. Secondly, the absence of bracketing was considered a disadvantage. Bracketing is considered useful specifically to reduce the possibility of over-identification of the researcher with the material; this is pertinent given the shared experience of training to become a counselling psychologist by the researcher. On the basis of these grounds the hermeneutic approach in the tradition of Heidegger and Gadamer was discarded.

A heuristic approach developed by Moustakas (1994) was briefly considered as appropriate as it shares many of the same philosophical assumptions of the current study. As a phenomenological method interested in human experience and essences it could potentially elucidate how trainees experience *anxiety* during the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist. Additionally a heuristic study could provide an in-depth understanding of this phenomenon which converges with one of the aims of this study. However an important divergence which contributed to the exclusion of this method is the emphasis on increasing the researcher's self-awareness and self-knowledge (Moustakas, 1994). This aim seems to relegate the phenomenon studied to a secondary position with the interest in the self of the researcher identified as primary. This position could be described as 'self-indulgent' which is a position echoed by Greenwood (2010 cited by Rowe, 2010, p. 152). It is suggested that the focus on the self of the researcher detracts from a thorough explication of the structure of the experience of *anxiety* and the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist. Therefore the aforementioned reasons contributed to the decision to exclude the Heuristic approach as a means of answering the research question of the current study.

3.7. Personal and methodological reflexivity

The use of reflexivity is important in phenomenology in particular and qualitative research in general as it explicates the researcher's contribution and role in the construction of meanings. A definition of reflexivity put forward by Finlay (2008, p 3) is a 'self-aware evaluation of the intersubjective dynamics between the research and researched. It involves critical self-reflection of how the researcher's background, assumptions, positioning and behaviour influences the research process'. This position highlights awareness and the active use of self which Orlans and Van Scoyoc (2009) assert is important in counselling psychology research. The relationship between the researcher and the co-researcher is described in existential-phenomenology as co-constituted (Spinelli, 2003). Therefore the nature of this relationship requires explication to increase awareness of how the subjectivity of the researcher influenced the research process. In respecting the co-constituted nature in which the research process takes place personal and methodological reflexivity are considered to be an important means of achieving validity. Willig (2001) speaks of personal and epistemological reflexivity in research with the latter discussed in further detail below. Personal reflexivity will be considered in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Box 2: Epistemological reflexivity

I approached the research question and methodology from an established interest in existentialism, having studied philosophy and existentialism as part of my undergraduate degree. An assumption was made that the framework of existentialism could offer important insights into the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist through the lens of *anxiety*. The assumption that existence and knowledge is structured according to universal existential givens such as anxiety informed my epistemological position. As a consequence of these assumptions the existential phenomenological approach was identified as an appropriate research method.

3.8. Research design

The aim of the current investigation was to obtain comprehensive accounts of the co-researchers life-world. The research method was employed to investigate the question of how trainee counselling psychologists experience the process of *becoming* with reference to *anxiety*. The research design of this study is naturalistic which attempts to remain as close as possible to the experience of the co-researcher. As a consequence this implies a rejection of coding or categorisation which tends towards reductionist accounts of experience. However a transformation of the data unavoidably occurs when it is translated from one medium to another. An example of this is seen when recording or transcribing accounts which changes data in particular ways. To remedy this Willig (2001, p.16) states that the aim is to ensure as little as possible is 'lost in translation'. Therefore despite the inevitability of co-researcher's accounts being altered through data collection and analysis techniques the aim was to remain as faithful as possible to the experience of *becoming* a counselling psychologist through the lens of *anxiety*.

In phenomenological research it is not always possible to determine the number of co-researchers to be interviewed before conducting the research and analysis. The number of co-researchers interviewed is based on the nature of the research question and the quality of the findings produced. The goal of qualitative research is to produce intensive and authentic descriptions (McLeod, 1994) not to achieve statistical generalisation. Additionally the purpose of phenomenological research is to describe the structure of an experience (Polkinghorne, 1989) not the characteristics of the group who have had the experience. The purpose of selecting co-researchers is to generate a fund of descriptions and elements (Polkinghorne, 1989) which can be used to determine the essential structure of the phenomena. Therefore the logic of statistical sampling theory differs from the logic of selecting co-researchers in phenomenological research. As a result co-researchers are selected on the basis that they have experienced the phenomenon of interest to the researcher and can describe it fully.

The number of co-researchers selected for phenomenologically-based studies varies considerably. Giorgi (2008a) mentions that at least three co-researchers are sufficient to provide enough variations to elucidate the structure of the particular phenomenon. Fischer (1989) however studied twenty-five subjects in his empirical phenomenological study on the experience of being anxious. The number of co-researchers interviewed was based on the following criteria identified by Wertz (2005, p. 171) as follows: a) reflection on the nature of the goals of the research, b) the life-world of the co-researcher and c) the quality of the emergent data. The goal of the research was to arrive at a sufficient number of variations of the experience of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with respect to *anxiety*. Seven co-researchers were interviewed which was seen as generating sufficient examples of in-depth accounts of the phenomenon under investigation; at this point saturation had been achieved. Through critical reflection and deliberation on the nature and quality of the emergent findings, the analysis was found to provide a sufficient number of variations once seven situated structural descriptions had been developed.

It was thought that the life-world of the co-researchers as lived and given directly in human experience could be described by the co-researchers with a good degree of sensitivity. This was based on the assumption that trainees and recently qualified counselling psychologists would have a well-developed awareness and the ability to reflect on their experiences and feelings. Additionally it was assumed that these experiences would be of interest to them especially when reference is made to the importance of self-reflection in the counselling psychology discipline (BPS, 2005). Suitable subjects are required to possess six skills according to Van Kaam (1969 cited by Polkinghorne, 1989, p. 47-48) with two of particular relevance at this point, they are as follows: a) the experience of the situation under investigation at a recent date and b) a spontaneous interest in their experience. Research participants were assumed to possess these skills as the advertisement stipulated that the aforementioned criteria should be met for participation. Therefore by possessing these key attributes it was considered that the co-researchers could provide in-depth descriptions; these

would be used to determine the essential structure of the phenomenon of *becoming* a counselling psychologist through the lens of *anxiety*.

3.8.1. Co-researchers

The research question was to identify the structure of *becoming* a counselling psychologist and the experience of *anxiety* from the perspective of trainees. Co-researchers were counselling psychologists in training or recently qualified counselling psychologists. To be eligible to participate in this study trainee counselling psychologists needed to be involved in a BPS accredited doctoral counselling psychology training programme. Qualified counselling psychologists were also recruited however it was required that they had qualified recently. No limitations were imposed on the length of time since completion of training although 'early career counselling psychologists' were requested in the advertisement.

This sample consisted of six women and one man with seven co-researchers participating in the study. The co-researcher's ages varied from twenty-four to fifty-five. Between the seven co-researchers four different training institutions were represented. Two of the co-researchers had recently (within the previous 6 months) qualified as counselling psychologists whilst the other co-researchers were second and final year students. The group of co-researchers shared several key demographics namely the same professional status and background in counselling psychology. The co-researchers differed in key respects namely gender, ethnicity and nationality. The sample was heterogeneous in relation to demographic factors which is an advantage in phenomenologically-based research. Polkinghorne (1989) warns that a narrow selection of co-researchers can reduce the possibility of obtaining richly varied descriptions. In this regard the purpose of phenomenological research is to obtain a variation of descriptions which can be used to determine the essence of the phenomenon under investigation. Homogeneity is important in phenomenological research only in so far as all co-researcher's have direct experience of the phenomenon under investigation.

The research methodology of existential phenomenological analysis departs from traditional psychology which assumes the possibility of truly objective investigation and observation. The idea that co-researchers are treated as experimental objects for use by the researcher is abandoned and replaced with the notion that research is a collaborative enterprise. In existential phenomenological research an indissoluble inter-relationship exists between the researcher and the focus of the investigation; the two are said to co-constitute one another. It is through the dialogue between the individual and the world that reality is constructed. Participants are known as 'co-researchers' in the existential phenomenological approach. The term 'co-researcher' is described by Shertock (1998) as capturing the sense of emergent meaning as co-constituted by the description of the co-researcher and the interpretative process of the researcher. The focus is on the use of exploratory methods designed to achieve increasingly adequate descriptions of the phenomena as it is lived.

3.8.2. Recruitment

Participants were located using a combination of techniques. An advertisement (Appendix A) was placed in the Division of Counselling (DCoP) Announcements List where all members were emailed requesting participation in this research project. The advertisement requested participation in a study looking at stresses in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist; self-selection was controlled for through excluding participants who had in the past accessed services as a direct consequence of stress. Counselling psychology departments at London-based universities were contacted requesting that details of this study be circulated to students with a request for participation. Additionally an advertisement was placed in a local counselling organisation requesting research participants. These methods yielded seven participants. Interested participants emailed the researcher and were provided with further information in the form of an Information Sheet which detailed the nature of the research with reference made to ethical considerations and a Consent Form (Appendix B). All participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point, they were however advised that their data could still be used in an aggregate form; no participants decided to withdraw and all consented to their material being used in the final write up.

The use of the term 'stresses' in the recruitment process requires clarification as it diverges from the secondary focus of this study namely how *becoming* is revealed through *anxiety*. The term 'stress' is defined Lazarus and Folkman (1984, p. 19) as follows: 'Psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his/ her resources and endangering his/ her well-being'. This definition was considered appropriate as it identified the importance of the environment in the experience of stress; the relationship between the person and world is emphasised throughout this study. Additionally the definition was considered appropriate for this study as it allowed for the greatest possible flexibility for participant generated meanings to emerge in relation to their experience of becoming a counselling psychologist. Willig (2001) describes this as a bottom-up approach which is characteristic of qualitative data collection techniques.

3.8.3. Ethical considerations

The research proposal was submitted to the Roehampton University, Department of Psychology Ethics Committee. The proposal was passed although the Committee required a clarification of how the issue of self-selection and the issue of anxiety and stress would be approached. This issue is discussed above in section 3.8.2.

The ethical principles of confidentiality, informed consent and the risk of potential harm to participants were considered. The ethical guidelines in this study were based on the Data Protection Act 1998 and the British Psychological Society in relation to conducting research, maintaining confidentiality and standards of record keeping (BPS, 2009b; 2002). Co-researchers were provided with a 'fair processing notice' detailing how their personal data would be used in the study. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity identity numbers were allocated to all co-researchers and were used for all transcripts, consent forms and audio recordings. Pseudonyms were used in Chapter Four of this study to maintain confidentiality and to ensure anonymity. Co-researchers were required to sign consent forms providing information

about the nature of the research; the standard of informed consent was maintained in this manner. The risk of potential harm to the co-researchers was assessed as low. However due to the possibility that sensitive or anxiety-provoking material could be elicited in the research interview, co-researchers were debriefed at the end of the interview and were provided with information about support agencies they could contact. The Debriefing form can be found in Appendix C.

3.8.4. Validity

The aim of specifying validity in psychological research is to avoid the possibility of irrelevant criteria being applied to evaluate research. As a consequence there is a requirement to establish the distinctive criteria which should be used to evaluate the quality of this study. The criteria used in quantitative research to determine quality are, reliability, validity, representativeness, generalisation and objectivity which Willig (2008) states are not applicable to qualitative research in their current form. Madill et al (2000) note that because there is no such thing as a unified qualitative research paradigm criteria for evaluating qualitative research need to be tailored to fit the particular method. The validity criteria relevant to this study are informed by Yardley (2000) and Giorgi (1975) and are discussed below.

Yardley (2000, p. 219) identifies four characteristics which can be applied to qualitative research; these however are not prescriptions but can be applied flexibly. They are, 1) Sensitivity to context involves the incorporation of theory and understanding created by other investigators using similar methods or who have analysed similar topics; this is an important aspect influencing the interpretation of data. Context includes the incorporation of fairly extensive grounding in the philosophy of the approach used. Yardley (2000) states that the analysis should be sensitive to the data itself through the inclusion of empirical evidence. Additionally the social context between the researcher and co-researcher is important in relation to how the characteristics of the researcher influence the balance of power and process of investigation. 2) Commitment and rigour. Commitment involves prolonged engagement with

the topic and the development of competence and skill in methods used and immersion in relevant data. Rigour refers to the completeness of data collection and the ability to supply sufficient information for a comprehensive analysis. 3) Transparency and coherence. Transparency in presentation involves the ability to create a convincing account of a reality which readers can recognise as meaningful to them. Yardley (2000) identifies that transparency is important and refers to detailing every aspect of the data collection process and rules used to code the data. In this regard reflexivity is included as an important aspect. Coherence refers to the fit between theory and method. Additionally the persuasiveness and argumentation of the description is involved in coherence. Giorgi (1975, p. 96) reiterates this point stating that '[t]hus the chief point ... of this research is not so much whether another position with respect to the data could be adopted (this point is granted beforehand) but whether a reader, adopting the same viewpoints as articulated by the researcher, can also see what the researcher saw, whether or not [s]he agrees with it. That is the key criterion for qualitative research'. 4) Impact and importance refers to the ultimate value of the research which can only be applied in accordance with the aims of the analysis, the applications it was intended for and the community for whom the findings are deemed relevant. Therefore the aforementioned criteria for determining validity are identified as appropriate for the current study.

3.8.5. Procedure

Preparatory steps

In deciding which method would be the most appropriate to answer the research question of the experience of *becoming* a counselling psychologist as revealed through *anxiety* the researcher immersed herself in the literature of existential-phenomenology. The researcher had a clear idea of the phenomenon to be researched (as can be seen in Box 1) however no steps were taken to operationalise it. This is in keeping with phenomenology's stance of allowing the phenomenon to emerge into consciousness in new and potentially illuminating ways. The researcher engaged in self-reflection and conducted a self-interview on the process of training to become a counselling psychologist and the experience of anxiety; this was a means of identifying the researcher's expectations and presuppositions which could potentially be

imposed on the study. The impact of the researcher's subjectivity on data collection which was elicited through the self-interview will be considered below.

Box 3: Epistemological reflexivity: Self-interview

I conducted a self-interview at the outset of the research process as a means of identifying my preconceptions and biases. The self-interview revealed that I implicitly assumed that the process of becoming a counselling psychologist would generally involve anxiety. Awareness of this assumption and the subsequent bracketing of it allowed me to remain open to the phenomenon of becoming a counselling psychologist as it appeared for co-researchers. The openness to different possibilities in relation to the process of becoming a counselling psychologist was reflected in the advertisement stating that the area of interest was "The process of becoming a counselling psychologist and the stresses involved" rather than making the assumption that this process would automatically involve anxiety. The language used in the advertisement most notably the term 'stresses' reflected the everyday naive language which Giorgi (1976) suggests forms the basis of a good descriptive account.

By means of bracketing the researcher attempted to put aside as many of her preconceptions and theoretical biases relating to the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. The notion of bracketing as facilitative to an open attitude is described in more detail in section 3.7 and is advocated by Giorgi (2008a). Individual phenomenological reflection is advocated by Colaizzi (1973) which is similar to self-reflection and aims to identify presuppositions and parameters of the experience to be investigated.

3.8.6. Research question

Co-researchers were asked to describe in detail how they experienced the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist. Co-researchers were asked about the meanings they attached to the central themes of personal and professional growth and *anxiety*. A protocol of questions can be found in Appendix D. By requesting in-depth descriptions of these themes, it was assumed that something of significance to the process and structure of *becoming* a counselling psychologist and *anxiety* would be revealed. This question was of significance to the researcher who as a counselling psychologist in training was alerted to the possibility that the process of becoming a counselling psychologist seemed to converge with issues of human existence like anxiety, freedom and choice.

3.8.7. Data collection

Semi-structured interviews were used to elicit descriptions of how co-researchers experienced the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety*. A semi-structured life-world interview is influenced by phenomenology and is interested in obtaining nuanced descriptions of the life-worlds of co-researchers. In maintaining a phenomenological emphasis on how the phenomenon is lived by the co-researcher an attitude of openness is used by the researcher, or what Kvale and Brinkmann (2009, p.30) describe as 'deliberate naiveté'; this allows for unexpected meanings to occur and eschews ready-made categories and schemes of interpretation. This position is echoed by Willig (2001) who notes the importance of facilitating the emergence of new, unanticipated meanings.

A tension occurred by eliciting in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon whilst also remaining open to the possibility that new, unexpected meanings could occur in the interview. The interview method advocated by Giorgi and Giorgi (2008b, p. 40) was deviated from slightly in so far as they suggest that 'the participant should select the situation'; the researcher requested descriptions of central themes such as personal and professional growth and anxiety. This technique was however in keeping with phenomenology's concern with describing the given as

completely as possible. This step is supported by Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) who suggest that focusing on themes through open questions allows for certain dimensions to be brought forth; the co-researcher can choose to elaborate on these themes or not. This technique allowed for in-depth descriptions of the phenomenon of *becoming* a counselling psychologist with reference to *anxiety* to be elicited.

The interviews lasted on average between an hour and an hour and a half which provided sufficient time to explore the topic in depth. The length of the interviews was influenced by the assumption that the topic required some reflection on the part of the co-researchers. The interviews were recorded and transcribed verbatim into protocols. The influence of the researcher's subjectivity on the data is important in a contextual constructionist epistemology (Madill, et al, 2000). This position highlights the inevitability of bringing one's cultural and personal perspectives to bear on the research project. Therefore the influence of the researcher's subjectivity on the data generated from the interview process will be discussed below.

Box 4: Epistemological reflexivity: Knowledge produced through interviewing

I am a white female aged 34 from a middle-class European background which were characteristics shared with most of the co-researchers. Despite the shared trainee role the co-researchers and the interview process may have been influenced by the power inherent in the role of researcher; the co-researchers may have acquiesced to my view of reality and offered narratives in keeping with my view.

The shared demographic features may have influenced the interview process and data in specific ways. For instance the demographic similarities may have had an influence on the data generated during the interviews in relation to common cultural understandings. Good rapport developed between me and the co-researchers which facilitated in-depth exploration of sensitive material. However due to the shared cultural assumptions and a similar knowledge base it was inevitable that certain phrases and statements were understood in a taken-for-granted way which prevented further exploration and clarity. The shared professional knowledge base and training experiences obscured meanings with Polyani (1969, 1967) describing this as 'tacit knowledge'. I became aware of shared assumptions potentially obscuring idiosyncratic meanings through reflection on the first interview. Several times in the first interview descriptions were cut short with the co-researcher suggesting that further elaboration wasn't needed as I must know what she meant; the implication was that I must have had a similar experience. By reflecting on this first interview, my stance to subsequent interviews was altered most notably in the form of requesting clarification on vague descriptions or seemingly self-evident statements.

3.9. Data analytic steps

The aim of a phenomenological analysis is to determine the meaning of an experience through the use of the method developed by Giorgi (1975, 1985, 2003) and additionally described by Polkinghorne (1989). An annotated transcript is included in Appendix E which details steps 1-3 of the analytic steps carried out in the current research. The steps outlined below allow for the research question of the process of *becoming* a counselling psychologist and the experience of *anxiety* to be described and explored in greater detail. The steps are as follows:

(1) The researcher reads through all the data prior to analysis of the text to get a general sense of the whole statement (Giorgi, 1985, 1997). The researcher remains present to the situation being described by the co-researcher which prepares the ground for the next step.

(2) Discrimination of Meaning Units within a Psychological Perspective. This step involves re-reading the protocol within the phenomenological reduction whilst maintaining a psychological attitude. Transitions in meaning are marked in the text. The results of these meaning discriminations are called 'meaning units' which are not objective meaning units but correlated with the perspective of the researcher. The meaning units are expressed in the everyday language of the co-researcher and are constituents of the experience. For phenomenological claims to be made the reduction is necessary and requires the researcher to withhold all previous knowledge of the phenomenon. This step allows the researcher to be fully present to the description of the instance of the phenomenon identified by the co-researcher. Wertz (2005, p. 175) calls this an attitude of 'highly empathic wonder' which is free from value judgements and allows for the meaning of the situation experienced by the co-researcher to emerge. Whilst remaining sensitive to the phenomenon the assumption of a psychological perspective presupposes the identification of meaning units of interest to psychology.

(3) Transformation of the everyday expressions of the co-researcher into psychological language with emphasis on the phenomenon being investigated. This step is the heart of the method (Giorgi & Giorgi, 2003) and seeks to articulate the psychological meanings as lived by the co-researcher, revealing the nature of the phenomenon under investigation. The everyday language of the co-researcher is transformed into terms relevant for the psychological discipline by means of the researcher's disciplinary intuition, reflection and imaginative variation. The researcher's presence is most obvious here according to Von Eckartsberg (1998). Reflection requires careful and sensitive reading of the text whilst making explicit what is being described. Through imaginative variation which is a type of mental experimentation aspects of the experience are intentionally altered until the transformation no longer describes the underlying description. There are two reasons for this according to Polkinghorne (1989) namely, to

produce meaning transformations on which there is consistent intersubjective agreement and to move beyond the cryptic multiple realities described by co-researchers in favour of elucidating psychological aspects.

(4) Transformed meaning units are synthesised into a situated structural description. An example of a situated structural description can be found in Appendix F. The description includes specifics of the situation in which the phenomenon took place and is developed for each protocol. The specific description of the situated structure remains faithful to the concrete subject and situation.

(5) Synthesis of the transformed meaning units into a General Structural Description. The situated structural descriptions are integrated and synthesised into a final consistent description of the psychological structure of the phenomenon. This involves developing a general structure which transcends the specific situation to find a universal trans-situational description of the psychological structure of the phenomenon (Giorgi, 1985).

4.1. Introduction

In this chapter the findings will be presented in response to the research question of how trainees experience the process of becoming a counselling psychologist through the lens of anxiety. This chapter will present the analysis of the interview protocols using an empirical-existential phenomenological method developed by Giorgi (1985). On the basis of this method the structures of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to the experience of anxiety will be identified. These structures will be illustrated by means of extracts taken from co-researcher's accounts. The findings are discussed with reference to both the general, phenomenological structure and the unique, existential constituents of the phenomenon of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety. A reflective statement based on empirical data will follow the identified structures.

4.2. Becoming as imagined

The general structure of becoming as imagined is described in terms of the general and foundational themes which constitute this experience.

The phase prior to training which is becoming-as-imagined is constituted by mental representations of self, others and the training course projected into the future as a self, other or context yet-to-be-encountered. Significance and value are created through the interaction between idiosyncratic expectations, beliefs and assumptions which are attached to one's psychological reality and to the general features of the training environment. The future directed image of what it is to be a counselling psychologist has value-laden and personally desirable qualities attached to it; there is an imaginative juxtaposition of the current and future self. A representation of how the self will be transformed and re-constituted in a different

manner appears in consciousness. To achieve this desired identity, transformation of the current-self is required which occurs through the interaction with different parts of one's psychological reality. The affective response of anxiety occurs through engaging with the idea of becoming a counselling psychologist and represents a style of living and being-in-the-world which constitutes becoming-as-imagined. Value and meaning are in part derived from the affective experience of interacting with the dream and aspiration of becoming a counselling psychologist.

Co-researchers described becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to the medium of time. In other words, the significance of events related to the becoming process occurs on the basis of where they are located in the past, present or future. Prior to starting the counselling psychology course co-researchers engage in academic, clinical and personal preparations which facilitate acceptance on to the course and provide the co-researchers with the necessary foundations for professional training. Through imaginatively thinking of and working towards admission onto the professional training programme a mental image of what it means to be a counselling psychologist is established and maintained. For co-researchers this is affectively experienced and held in mind as something yet-to-be-fulfilled. The image of this potentiality exists in the mind of the co-researchers as a future-oriented event prior to the actuality of the training and is thought of as a dream, aspiration or goal. The forward movement towards this goal or image is felt as progressive. Lauren offers a view of becoming as immersed in time, as follows:

Extract 1:

I remember feeling incredibly excited to be getting started, definitely feeling like right this is the first of me moving forward and no longer being an assistant psychologist, I can now be a trainee. So a nice feeling of progression.

The notion of becoming a counselling psychologist is considered as something of value by the co-researchers with significance structured by the idiosyncratic meanings intersecting with general profession-specific mores. This means that theoretical and philosophical tenets underpinning the professional training course interacts with individual qualities such as the unique value-base, personality and childhood history of the co-researcher. As a result an amalgamation of the general and particular takes place which creates a representation of what it means personally to be a counselling psychologist. For Terry the importance of a value-base consonant with his own affected his choice of potential courses, as follows:

Extract 2:

And I think probably optimistic I reckon as well, having been to the university and having done the rounds of having interviews and stuff...and deciding to go to X [university] because, because I liked the ethos of the place. I was quite optimistic about what it had to offer I suppose and it was the beginning of this.

For the co-researchers meaning is created through the interaction of individual and course and/or profession specific values with the two required to correspond and complement the other. Ivanka speaks of the potentiality the image of counselling psychologist takes on saying:

Extract 3:

I think there were different feelings. To start with I was just happy you know because I had made my plan that I would do my undergraduate and my Masters and do [sic] experience and kind of the Doctorate was kind of the last step basically and I was like yay, finally and um so I was just ecstatic, really happy to get in and I think that was followed by the realisation in my head that, I thought the Doctorate was going to be this amazing thing, it was going to teach me everything,

that I was going to know everything and I was going to become this great psychologist.

The professional training course is valuable and represents a progression signifying the beginning of the final phase of a process. The end point is highly desirable in terms of the personal change which will take place and the knowledge to be acquired. For co-researchers significance becomes attached to the training programme through the perception that it corresponds to and is able to bring about highly desired personally held outcomes and values.

Becoming as imagined was constituted by expectations and assumptions which structured how co-researchers would participate in the reality of the training environment. Co-researchers perceived the future role of trainee as requiring them to act and behave in a certain manner. In other words the interaction with the environment and others was perceived as exerting an influence over and altering their usual style of behaviour, interaction or emotional expression. Through imagining the future environment co-researchers identified the need to be mature, competent, hard-working and to have a professional attitude towards others. Occupying this stance towards their environment was considered an important part of becoming a counselling psychologist. Meaning occurs through the notion that the course will transform the self of the trainee.

For co-researchers expectations and assumptions structured how the self, course and others were imagined and anticipated. This defined how these aspects would be encountered in future. For co-researchers meaning was created through envisaged interactions with the future-located environment of the training course; this was based on assumptions, expectations and images of what would constitute the context. The training process was considered in terms of practicalities such as logistics and scheduling. Additionally expectations of how the training would transfer valued skills and knowledge to the co-researcher were considered significant. Terry speaks about his expectations of the course in terms of the practicalities, as follows:

Extract 4:

And there were other things that were in the back of my head about actually what it entailed and the logistics at some stage towards the end I'm going to have to write a doctoral research project which at the beginning seems really daunting but it's far enough away that it seems completely intangible at that stage, and so that was sort of easy to push to the back of your mind and think I'll worry about that when I get to it.

The co-researchers anticipated experience of the course is co-constituted by the expectations attached to it; these expectations have the function of structuring the course environment. The meaning of these expectations influences how the course is affectively experienced. Expectations related to the acquisition of a generally vague set of skills and knowledge were imagined by co-researchers and located as a future outcome which would be achieved once the training had been completed. Co-researchers thought of the future as rich with possibilities of actualising the goal of becoming a counselling psychologist with emotions attached to this imagined reality.

The style in which the future-oriented environment, others and self will be experienced is expressed bodily, affectively and cognitively with anxiety attesting to the significance of what will be encountered. Co-researchers experienced anxiety through a consideration of how the self will be involved in becoming a counselling psychologist and the activities directed towards achieving this goal. The training process is evaluated as making stringent demands on co-researchers with concerns relating to whether this will be managed successfully. The self of the co-researcher is personally involved with the quality of this involvement eliciting a sense of insecurity. Sam describes how her anxiety was constituted by the aspects of self which she considered as lacking namely her young age and her limited life experience interacting with requirements perceived in the training environment, as follows:

Extract 5:

So that added to my anxiety that I wasn't going to be a good enough therapist because I didn't even fit the criteria for some training courses. Yeah so that added to it.

This extract demonstrates that anxiety is constituted by the future envisaged interactions with clients; fears are experienced that the co-researcher will prove inadequate or damaging to the client as attested to by Sam. For co-researchers value and significance are attached to working with clients and is considered as highly significant to what it means to be and become a counselling psychologist.

The context consisted of colleagues, clients and the environment and featured prominently in the image co-researchers constructed of the training process. These were considered in terms of expectations and the effect this would have on the self as a counselling psychologist in the process of becoming. Others were located within a context of interactions constructed in imagination and were thought of as taking on particular qualities such as warm, supportive or familial. The qualities of these interactions contributed to the image co-researchers had of the course environment. For some co-researchers there was an expectation that the course and peers would be supportive and that the training context would feel like a family. For others there was an expectation that the tutors would be supportive or that that client work would be easy. Therefore by means of an interactional process others co-constituted the self as a counselling psychologist in the process of becoming. This can be seen by Sam interpreting the lower age limit applied by some doctoral counselling psychology courses as an instruction to develop in a particular area, as follows:

Extract 6:

Yeah I guess my age did play quite a big part than [sic] I thought, that I can't just pull life experience out of thin air, I've got to, it's not something I can sort of acquire so I'm going to have to sort of think about other areas in which I can develop I suppose... so I guess an area which I could work on was my maturity levels, yeah and my I guess interpersonal skills.

How the self as a counselling psychologist will be constituted in the developmental process is experienced by co-researchers as occurring in interaction with the environment and others.

To conclude, a structural component of becoming as imagined is that it is informed by time based on the possibility of something which is yet-to-be-fulfilled; the aspiration anticipates the future. For co-researchers the significance of the training process is co-constituted through the intersection between the course components, expectations of the type of interactions with others and the individual idiosyncratic expectations of what it means to be and become a counselling psychologist. Becoming as imagined is structured through expectations of how the future will be constituted in interaction with how the co-researcher will transform into a counselling psychologist. For co-researchers expectations of self and environment along with the personal significance of these are experienced affectively through anxiety, with anxiety illuminating the manner in which striving towards possibility occurs.

4.3. Confrontation with a different reality

This structure is constituted by a disjuncture between previously held assumptions which are projected into the future and are challenged and negated in the present. How this appears in the consciousness of the co-researchers is delineated through the structural description provided below.

In the confrontation with a different reality apprehension of difference takes place through a perceived departure and subsequent negation of previously developed expectations about the self, training context and others. It is constituted by uncertainty with the significance of the disjuncture between certainty and the unknown felt through anxious experiencing. The horizon of possibilities constituting one's psychological reality and what one will become in the face of currently experienced ambiguity is unknown. This confrontation with a different reality includes apprehending novelty relating to the self, others and the world with meaning-making attempts invoked to render this unfamiliarity coherent. A re-definition of the contours of self, world and others is required.

For co-researchers this period is constituted by the actuality of starting the professional training programme with this experienced as a confrontation with a reality different to the one expected. Arising from this is a cognitive, affective and behavioural response which is evoked in the co-researcher. The environment represents a high degree of novelty and uncertainty which departs sharply from what co-researchers expected and previously envisioned. The negation of assumptions relating to self, world and others and the actual experienced reality of the training process are ambiguous and requires re-negotiation.

A shock occurs upon immediate experience and engagement with the training course which is apprehended as unfamiliar and mysterious. For co-researchers the previously imagined definitional characteristics and expectations of the training course and process are subsequently challenged and negated. The lived world of the training programme and the imagined process is different to what was anticipated with the initial recognition of this difference and unfamiliarity experienced as jarring. A collision is apprehended between the previously held assumptions and the reality of an unknown training process which affects co-researchers in an embodied way. This is described by co-researchers as confusion, discomfort,

exhilarating and anxiety-provoking; the emerging new order is interpreted as ambiguous, unknown and vague. Julie expressed her initial response to the training context as:

Extract 7:

I described it in my final clinical paper as culture shock. I think I had no idea what I was letting myself in for.

In this extract the novelty and unfamiliarity experienced is total and relates to the disjuncture between the co-researcher's assumptions and expectations of the training course.

A structural component of the co-researchers confronting the new training environment is anxious experiencing. The co-researcher is deeply affected by the intersection between the unfamiliar and novel new world whilst trying to make sense of the new reality in the light of previously held expectations which now do not hold true. Aspects of the course, tutors and peers are encountered and co-constitute the anxious experiencing of the co-researcher with this occurring in the face of uncertain expectations. The quality of anxiety experienced is defined in the interactions with context-bound others. Ivanka described her response to the environment and to others as follows:

Extract 8:

I was quite disappointed. I was because, I think, because I think things weren't properly explained to us about what it would involve and what the sort of, the expectations [sic]. I still don't know what they expect but um... I guess the fact that you're on your own, you know, you know that wasn't, not that you expect someone to come and say you're on your own but the feeling is that I don't... it just feels... ok it was bad back then, it was difficult.

In relationship with others a cleavage appears between the previously envisaged expectations of how others would be experienced and the actual reality. The significance of this disjuncture between possibility and actuality is experienced by co-researchers affectively through anxiety.

The actual training course is the context in which interactions with others occur, with this lived world structured according to previously developed expectations. Others are considered to have particular attributes with the experienced actuality of others appearing as characteristically different and in contrast to what had been imagined. In actuality peers, clients and tutors are experienced by co-researchers as unpredictable with the departure from expectations noticeable at an interactional level. A divergence from these expectations elicits uncertainty which is constituted by affects ranging from disappointment, panic, anxiety to loneliness; this arises from the dissonance between beliefs and the actuality of what is encountered. Julie alludes to an interaction she had which was different to what had been expected, as follows:

Extract 9:

I guess we were being asked to be in a way that I had just not observed before and I think I appreciate it now because I think it was a very safe environment where especially in the experiential groups where you would be talking about different processes between different people but that had never been something I had seen to be explicit before so it seemed scary.

There is an ontological implication in what is required of her which was unanticipated. A change is required to her *being* with the significance of what is asked of her experienced as unexpected and frightening. In the meeting with this new environment the quality of relating to others and the manner in how the self of the co-researcher is constituted and implicated in this relationship is represented as unknown.

Uncertainty structures the process of becoming a counselling psychologist and occurs in relation to others; how the self will be constituted in the relationship with others is ambiguous and unknown. For co-researchers uncertainty extends to the 'what-ness' of the transformation into a counselling psychologist; the essence of what it means to be a counselling psychologist is not known. The form and qualities which will constitute the changes to self are opaque and lacking clearly defined contours. A characteristic of the felt uncertainty is that it arises from and is co-constituted through the qualities perceived in the training environment and in others. Terry speaks of the transformation to self as unknown in the following way:

Extract 10:

A bit of um, not really knowing where you are going to end up with it I suppose, not really knowing what you're going to turn out to be like at the end of three years of doing this course both in terms of personal development and the effects of working with clients and all the personal therapy is going to have on you and also in terms of professional development.

In this extract uncertainty extends to how the personal and professional self will be altered and re-constructed in interaction with others and the training process.

In summary, the confrontation with a different reality was reported by co-researchers as different to expectations. It involves one personally and profoundly on all levels and is initially encountered through expectations which are not accurate. In the cleavage between the potentiality of what was imagined and the experienced actuality of the training world, uncertainty is perceived and experienced by co-researchers in an anxious way. The anxiety which is felt occurs in the relationship with the new environment interacting with the ambiguities of what will constitute becoming. Ambiguity is felt at all levels of one's psychological reality and

extends into the projected future of how one will be transformed. Therefore an ontological implication emerges in the qualitative dimensions of how one's *Being* will be altered.

4.4. The struggle of becoming

Becoming a counselling psychologist is structured by the struggle co-researchers experience. The struggle to become is constituted by the meaning attached to the unfamiliar context in which self and others interact. The general and specific constituents of the struggle are described below.

In the becoming phase the interaction with the lived world of the training course constitutes how the struggle towards becoming a counselling psychologist is experienced. In the new context the self in relationship with others constitute how anxiety is experienced. The interaction of self with others in the training environment involves one in meaning-making activities and forms the ground from which learning about self, others and the therapeutic process takes place. Realisations occur and are constituted by intense emotional experiencing leading to change in aspects of consciousness.

In the struggle to become a counselling psychologist there is a dialectical interaction between the self, world and others with these affecting how change and becoming occurs for the co-researchers. For co-researchers the self is seen as contextualised with new meanings occurring in the interaction with the world and others. Through apprehending ambiguity on multiple levels a struggle towards becoming a counselling psychologist ensues. Anxious experiencing highlights the structure of the phenomenon of becoming which is constituted by the anxious style in which it is approached. Through anxiety an inward-looking stance is stimulated and a change to self occurs; this is instrumental in the re-negotiation of self, world and others. For co-researchers change to self is grounded in the struggle to make sense of and

re-negotiate one's psychological reality in the light of internal and external ambiguities. The struggle is located within the new environment in which one is actively involved and co-constitutes the internal struggle which is experienced.

There is an emphasis on others at this point with the other appearing to the co-researcher as unfamiliar. The hardship and struggle is constituted by encountering the other as unfamiliar and the efforts directed at rendering the interaction with an unfamiliar other meaningful. For co-researchers this occurs with reference to current ideas and preconceptions and requires the self to participate in the interaction in a different way. Interactions form the basis through which learning about self, others and the therapeutic process takes place. Terry provides an example of how his expectations were constructed and challenged and how this structured what he learned, as follows:

Extract 11:

I think there was maybe some sort of process of working out, working out who everybody was in terms of what kind of a relationship you were going to have with people, so are they going to be like your friends or your colleagues or strangers and yet you're in this environment that complicity you are going to be sharing very deep personal stuff so again some kind of anxiety around negotiating boundaries between people you have met, very, very, very [sic] negotiating boundaries very quickly with people you've only just met and trying to establish relationships and I think my way of doing that was probably one of being very excited and optimistic and perhaps not acknowledging that anxiety, so throwing myself into making friends and all that sort of stuff and then the disappointment when you realise that the university in classes and stuff and the way the course is structured is not going to perhaps hold you as much as you want.

The new reality which is encountered is structured in such a manner that it elicits anxiety for Terry; this provides the basis through which learning about self, others and key therapeutic principles takes place.

The context consists of the professional knowledge base which interacts with the co-researcher; this constitutes the struggle to become. The ambiguities characterising what it means to practice as a counselling psychologist and how this involves the self of the co-researcher is experienced with difficulty and affects how the developing self is constituted. Ruth describes this process as follows:

Extract 12

Practising in different models makes you find your own way because you try different ways of being with clients, the very boundaried, silent psychodynamic way, the very active, directive CBT way, so I guess that makes it difficult and you have to find your own way.

The significance of becoming is noted in how the self interacts with the ambiguous other in a therapeutic context.

The learning process is experienced as giving rise to anxiety which has a pervasive influence on the co-researcher. Anxiety is experienced and given meaning through the unique characteristics such as traits or history of the individual co-researcher interacting with the general aspects of the training context. Ivanka describes how anxiety occurs and affects her becoming a counselling psychologist, as follows:

Extract 13:

It just goes to that level that having gone to that level so many times like that extreme anxiety and then just being like well you know I can't be bothered anymore, I just can't be anxious anymore about this, I don't care if I don't become a psychologist, I don't care about anything.

The intensity of experienced anxiety gives rise to a sense of nothingness with the meaning previously attached to the aspiration of becoming a counselling psychologist now re-evaluated. Through anxiety and the awareness of nothingness which this experience evokes, the possibility of choice opens up.

Through participation in the course a struggle is experienced by co-researchers in relation to the extensive demands made on self; this influences how becoming and the world are perceived. The self interacting with the environment and the demands of the course involves the co-researcher in an all-encompassing and embodied manner. The co-researcher experiences difficulty in encountering and co-ordinating many different aspects with meaning emerging from this interaction. This context is experienced as exerting substantial demands on one in terms of the spatial constituents i.e. the space taken up by engaging with the logistics and activities of the professional training programme. Sam describes the personal effect contextual stressors had on her in the following manner:

Extract 14

Yeah at the time because you know you just want to give up because it all feels like it's too much and nearly half my course did give up so I think that was something that really hindered it so, so because I was having thoughts myself like should I continue this because I'm not enjoying it, it's just a pain in the butt and I can't, I don't have a life anymore.

The environment of the course co-constituted how she experienced becoming a counselling psychologist. This influenced her perception of the quality of her existence with the notion of what constituted her existence experienced as altered.

The self of the co-researcher is involved in the course and learning activities in a highly personal manner which implicates how consciousness is experienced. The process of becoming at this point is considered through the process of reflection. Reflection as inward-directed attention offers insight and information about the self and the self in interaction with the world and others. A contemplative and thoughtful attitude to the self and one's own material is adopted by co-researchers with reflection experienced as a slowing down. An inward-looking and in-dwelling attitude gives rise to subsequent analysis of personal history, personality, behaviour and affects with this process constituting learning about self. Co-researchers described this as overwhelming, revelatory and scary. Ivanka describes the process of reflecting on and uncovering aspects of self in the following way:

Extract 15

I really don't know if it's a good thing or bad thing anymore, it does feel like the Matrix, you know, you take the red pill and you don't, there's no turning back, even if you get out at this stage or any stage, you've got so far in uncovering a certain way of thinking or being or however you want to describe it. It's enlightening I suppose in terms of my self and my history and the way I relate to other people and their history and big ideas about you know knowledge and epistemology and philosophy and all that kind of stuff, so it's, big ideas and deep ideas which somehow start to feel inescapable which can be a bit much.

Learning about self, through reflection is experienced as enlightening which promotes a discovery-oriented stance to the world and others. It is through this reflective stance that the manner of engaging with the world, self and others is changed in a significant way. The changes which have taken place are experienced with some difficulty.

Reflection becomes an active process which reconstructs how the past is perceived and understood by co-researchers with this influencing the present and future. Through reflection on the manner in which one responds to situations and others a re-consideration of one's habitual emotional reactions is possible with some co-researchers extending this analysis to the historical antecedents of their idiosyncratic responses. In this manner co-researchers experienced a change to self with a constituent of this process identified as anxiety. Lauren described this process as akin to a 'mini-breakdown' elaborating as follows:

Extract 16

I mean that is very strong language but I think it's my way of trying to describe really having an eye-opener. I think I've been ticking on being, I'm great, I'm great, I'm going to be a great psychologist, but almost not really stopping and reflecting about the person I was, the way I was coming across.

Through the focus on inner experiencing in a reflective way the manner in which the self is conceived of and experienced is altered. This includes consideration of self in-relation to others. For co-researchers this process is experienced as disturbing and anxiety-provoking and represents a rupture from a previous way of being and relating.

In summary, the basis of the struggle to become a counselling psychologist is the unknown quality in which the self and other interacts with an ambiguous environment. Anxiety occurs in

this struggle of becoming a counselling psychologist which is experienced as a process in flux. The struggle is located within the dynamically interacting aspects of the encountered psychological reality with the co-researcher required to make sense of and alter established behaviour and modes of engaging with self, world and others. New meanings are created by the co-researcher and emerge in the interaction with others and the environment through a process of reflection. Characteristics of this environment and the opening up by the co-researcher to an inward, in-dwelling attitude facilitates a process of change.

4.5. The emergence and transformation

Emergence from the struggles previously experienced give rise to a sense of what it means to transform into a counselling psychologist. The general nature of this transformation is elucidated along with the specifics of how this occurs for the individual.

The emergence and transformation into a counselling psychologist is located in time. It is co-constituted by growth and change occurring through greater reflection on self, world and others within the context of the training programme. Through anxious experiencing reflection and greater self-awareness develops; this affects how self and others are understood in relation to one another. Development in self awareness and self consciousness are experienced as clarity in areas previously apprehended as vague or incomprehensible; this interacts with the possibility of greater choice. The self is the central means by which learning to become a counselling psychologist occurs and occupies a central position in interpreting significance. Through awareness the possibility of profound personal change is opened up and influences the nature in which existence is considered in relation to self and other.

A structural component of the transformation into a counselling psychologist is growth which is located in time. In the present a characteristic or skill possessed by self is judged as changed by co-researchers with reference to how it is perceived as appearing in the past with this influencing the future. Time and change interact to co-constitute how growth and development are conceived of and experienced. For some co-researchers the quality of change was experienced as moving through time in a rapid or gradual way. In considering that growth is constituted by the notion of time, Terry describes how he envisaged his development, as follows:

Extract 17

After each supervision I have to make notes in supervision [sic] which I find really helpful and I look back at previous forms of those or I look back at previous supervisor's assessments and kind of go hah, how naïve I was back then but at the same time I know that in six months time I'll be looking back on this point and I'll go hah, how naïve I was and so you know that's what's happening and you know that will probably always be the case.

The constituting nature of time in the perception of growth is illustrated in this quote. For co-researchers the quality of change is evaluated according to where it is located in the past, present or as projected into the future. In arriving at an evaluation of the changes that have taken place a previous aspect of functioning, whether related to self, or to the self-other interaction is juxtaposed and compared to how it currently appears; the aspect is judged by co-researchers as improved by means of comparison.

Change is conceived of as growth to self-experience such as building greater inner strength and development of insight. Acquisition and development of knowledge and therapeutic skills are experienced by co-researchers as an increase and improvement in proficiency and level of

skill; this occurs through participation in the activities related to the professional training course. For co-researchers the self is experienced as altered with development identified as influencing how the self is used and understood in other areas. Change in one area influences change in another area in a mutually reciprocal manner. Growth is considered as change to internal strength with some co-researchers identifying this through an improvement in the ability to work therapeutically with clients despite feeling high levels of distress. For co-researchers the development in this ability is recognised and created in the relationship with the client. Growth is understood as co-constituted through the interaction between the co-researcher and client. Ruth describes her understanding of the interrelated nature of personal and professional spheres of functioning, as follows:

Extract 18

I think it's affected me as a person and therefore as a practitioner. So it's first as a person, like all those things I talked about being stronger you know... and being able to understand a different culture and different ways... Basically about being stronger and more comfortable in myself so I guess I'm more confident, more confident in my work as well.

In the above extract the nature of personal and professional growth as co-constituting and inseparable from the other is noted. An evaluation occurs in relation to how the current personal and professional self is perceived in comparison to a past self.

Through anxious experiencing the self of the co-researcher moves towards the actualisation of the unique possibilities which constitute the specifics of what the transformation into counselling psychologist will look like; this transformation is influenced by general characteristics in the environment. For some co-researchers anxiety alluded to an area of personal or professional functioning which was perceived as requiring growth or attention as a means of becoming a

counselling psychologist. Through reflection on anxiety as experienced, knowledge of the self was acquired which opened up the possibility for further exploration and change. The style in which anxiety is experienced interacts with the self and the training environment and constitutes the nature of the development or growth taking place for the co-researcher. In the following extract Sam describes how anxiety located in the training context co-constituted the growth which took place for her, as follows:

Extract 19

I think those feelings were shaped or even the situation shaped those feelings which then shaped the development, so I guess the development stems from how I was processing things, but the situation and those feelings and how I was responding to that [sic], and I guess if the anxiety and stress wasn't there then the development would be, would've been different.

Through reflection on anxiety Sam becomes aware of how she was interpreting and experiencing an aspect of self; this opened up the way for self-exploration, self-knowledge and growth.

Growth and transformation into a counselling psychologist occurs for co-researchers through the process of reflection with this constituting how growth occurs in an individualised way. Development is considered as the increasing proficiency and frequency in the use of reflection. Value is attached to this process as a source of information and learning. The locus of the reflective process is the self, others or the context with thought and consideration directed to how the self is constituted and influenced in the interplay between these elements. The temporality of existence influences how reflection is experienced; it takes place in the present and is directed to the immediate present, past or future. Growth becomes apparent for co-researchers through reflection and juxtaposition of a past event or style of responding

compared to the present episode or behavioural style. Sam describes reflection as constituted by time in the following way:

Extract 20

I guess when I reflected back on that year, after I had completed it I thought ok it's been horrendous but I have actually learnt quite a lot and I've grown and matured quite a lot in that time.

Through reflection on a past event whilst located in the present the possibility of growth and development having taken place becomes evident to the co-researcher. Therefore reflection on the past can be seen to constitute how growth in the self is experienced in the present.

The process of reflection is characterised by a shift of attention and perception towards internal processes. This is experienced by co-researchers as an in-dwelling stance clarifying that which was previously vague or obscure; through this process self-knowledge and self-awareness develops. The process of reflecting is experienced by co-researchers as qualitatively different and superior to a previous state and represents a divergence in the way self and others are experienced. The changes which have taken place through the use of reflection on internal processes is described by Lauren as follows:

Extract 21

I would say previously, before the course I wasn't self-aware at all and I sort of, I don't know if this course was for me as well because it [sic] wasn't really reflecting and being self-aware wasn't something, I couldn't see the value in it and before starting the course, I thought it was silly and then writing reflective papers I thought

oh just make it up but now I've actually become aware of how important it is and I like it now.

In the above extract Lauren reflects on the development of reflection and self-awareness; by reflecting on her awareness, the utility of this skill is constructed in the present.

Learning takes place for co-researchers through direct experience of a skill, theory or technique associated with the therapeutic training course. Reflection on this experience provides a means of evaluating the importance of it. Through experimentation with different techniques, skills or theories and reflection on the experience of these aspects, the possibility of incorporating it into one's personal repertoire takes place. The relative value of a skill, theory or technique is evaluated through how the self and the self-in-relation is affected by it. Reflection on a particular aspect of practice occurs for co-researchers in the immediate present or as having taken place in the past with the act of reflecting constructing how it is understood. Direct experience can take the form of role-plays, client work, personal therapy or the application of theory to personal material with the possibility of integration into self mediated through reflection. The self of the co-researcher is seen as a significant part in how learning is constructed which is identified by Lauren, as follows:

Extract 22

Because you feel it just works so much better than just reading a handout or reading a slide. You learn about experience [sic] you felt and how you tried out this technique, we just very much tried out techniques in class and taking risks.

The manner in which the self is affected by what is learnt and how this is evaluated constitutes what learning is incorporated.

In the process of becoming a counselling psychologist the role and value of the self is altered. The learning which takes place for co-researchers is mediated through the effect it has on self with this effect constituted as a source of information. The focus on self is maintained and represents an attitude which is embodied in the mode in which the world and others are encountered. Therapeutic concepts are applied to the self with the value of these ideas assessed according to the effect this has on the self; this is then extended to use with clients. As a result an active relationship exists between information and the co-researcher with personal relevance constructed in the interaction between the two. Terry describes how this process unfolds with an emphasis located in the first instance on how he experiences a concept, as follows:

Extract 23

Um, because when you're learning new things and reading new books and different approaches and different ideas then the first departure point for me is always going to be myself and how it applies to me and then how it applies to others around me who I know.

In the above extract the self is valued as an important source of information particularly with reference to how the self is affected by theoretical ideas. Awareness of how self is affected by knowledge constitutes the qualities and nature of knowledge; in this way knowledge becomes personalised and affects self in-relation.

Learning is a constituent of the process of becoming a counselling psychologist and is characterised by greater integration of self and therapeutic knowledge. For co-researchers an abstract concept is altered through direct experience of it and the effect it has on self. The concept becomes integrated into the co-researcher's consciousness and becomes a means of

structuring and understanding interactions with others and the environment both professionally and personally. This new integrated information defines how the world is understood and interacted with. Terry offers a description of how theoretical ideas become personally integrated in the following way:

Extract 24

You could apply Bowlby's secure base and ambivalence to the university and all that sort of stuff, so it feels quite embodied I suppose, all of the theory, or it can be as embodied as you want to make it, all the theory you are learning can be very much applied to yourself and what is going on.

In this extract the theory becomes integrated in an embodied way specifically in relation to how it becomes relevant to self; it becomes a means of structuring one's lived experience.

Therefore becoming a counselling psychologist involves an increase in awareness of self, others and the environment with characteristics of these aspects co-constituting how awareness is experienced for co-researchers. Reflection is a constituent of the development of greater awareness, with greater clarity around aspects of self, other or context arrived at through reflection. As a result through awareness a shift is experienced by co-researchers from a previous state characterised by opacity to a progressive increase in awareness or understanding which departs from previous conceptualisations. Through awareness changes in the style and mode of thinking take place. In this way greater clarity offers a means of constructing the self in interaction with others and the world in a different way. Awareness is an achievement by which experiences and processes that have taken place in the past are reflected on by co-researchers and integrated into the present style of being. In describing the process of becoming aware, Amanda speaks of re-constituting her identity in a more self-aware way, as follows:

Extract 25

I thought to myself, this experience is almost like the course has stripped, stripped me bare, it's... denuded person almost [sic] and I'm thinking I've got to re-clothe myself now, I've got to kind of, I'm at a fairly low point but I've got to... put back the clothes or put back these layers but I've got to put them back very carefully, I've got to think about how do I, how do I put them back and not be the kind of person who takes things for granted or who just happens to find that things go easily for her because it doesn't go like that for everybody.

Through reflecting on aspects of her self namely her values and assumptions within the context of the training environment Amanda develops greater self- awareness which constructs the altered way in which she perceives people in the present.

For co-researchers greater self-awareness is stimulated through anxious experiencing. This occurs through directing attention to an area of consciousness or behaviour within a specific context which is then reflected on and understood with greater clarity. Through reflecting on the experience of anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist aspects of self are brought into consciousness. Through awareness of the meaning attached to anxiety and how this is experienced in the past and present greater awareness and understanding is achieved for the co-researchers. A possibility for influencing anxiety in the present occurs through greater self-awareness. Co-researchers considered greater awareness of the possible meanings of anxiety in relation to self and others as demonstrative of growth and the development into a counselling psychologist. Terry describes his perception of awareness as bringing to light an aspect of his emotional responding which was previously opaque, as follows:

Extract 26

I suppose there is a degree of uncovering and understanding which continues but when you, when I realise that I'm the sort of person that likes to feel competent and can feel anxious otherwise um, then in some way kind of explains it.

Knowledge of one's particular affective style and being-in-the-world is seen through the experience of anxiety which facilitates self-awareness. The experience of anxiety creates an opening for reflection with awareness of this phenomenon providing information about the self, world or others and the inter-relation between them.

For co-researchers development in self awareness involves increased knowledge of specific idiosyncratic features of the self which influences interactions with others. Self and other are understood and constituted differently as a result of increased awareness which is based on reflection. Self-awareness influences how being-in-relation is experienced with the self constructed in a different way to previous points in the process of becoming. The change in self co-constitutes the nature of the interaction with the other.

Co-researchers experienced the integration of learning and therapeutic skills as beneficial to engagement with a client in the therapeutic environment. For co-researchers involvement in learning activities associated with the training course provide the impetus for growth in how the self of the co-researcher is understood and experienced and how others and the world are thought of. Lauren describes how through analysing parts of her self, awareness and learning occurs, as follows:

Extract 27

I think to develop you do need to become more aware of yourself because then you become more aware of areas of yourself that are more unhealthy or that you need to work on, yeah, if you become more aware of how you are then you can become more aware of how you are with your client and then perhaps how your awareness of yourself with your client [sic]. I think it helps to think about how you work with your client and what's going on for your client.

Through awareness of self the possibility arises of altering the nature and quality of the interaction with a client; the self and heightened self-awareness are considered important therapeutic tools with greater choice taking place as a result.

With reference to an increased awareness of self the possibility for engaging with the other in a different manner is made possible for co-researchers. Through awareness of the past, the freedom to choose to act differently opens up and is in contrast to an earlier position which was characterised by a lack of choice. The freedom to choose to act in a different way as a function of increased self-awareness is described by Lauren:

Extract 28

I think personal therapy generally speaking has given me so much more awareness that I am able to look at the way I'm reacting to situations or whatever it might be with a lot more awareness now [sic] so that I can now choose to maybe act in a different way or think about what I'm going to do first. I think maybe before I was always a bit mindless, so running around doing things.

In this extract the present quality of consciousness is different to how this was considered in the past namely lacking awareness of self; the quality of her presence is more immediate through reflection in the present. In this extract awareness of the past in the present allows Lauren the possibility of acting in a different more authentic way which represents a new way of being for her.

Through becoming more aware of self a transformation into a counselling psychologist takes place for co-researchers with this influencing the stance taken up in therapeutic work. The self mediates the significance attached to knowledge and skills and the style in which these are used in the therapeutic context. In the transformation into a counselling psychologist there is a sense of self as determining one's actions rather than being determined by an external source. This shift affects the manner in which the therapeutic encounter and the self-in-relation are constituted. The self is experienced by co-researchers as altered through occupying a responsible and authentic stance. As a result the therapeutic context is constructed based on the active choice exercised by the co-researcher in-relation to the other. Co-researchers described the development as an internally derived sense of authority with a greater trust and valuing of self.

The ability to exercise active choice over one's life and Being is a function of growth and development; this takes place through reflection and is described by Lauren, as follows:

Extract 29

I have an idea that you're making a commitment to doing something which is more a way of life. I kind of thought I'll just do this PhD and just get the qualification and that will be great and actually beginning to see that this is something much more deep, that it's about an attitude you have to life, it's a way you choose to relate to people, it's a lifelong kind of thing, if you want it to

be. I suppose people can just go and do this training and quit but I don't want to do that, it's more about developing your own identity, your own philosophy, your own approach. Yeah, that's it.

This extract highlights the nature of change which is experienced in the transformation into becoming a counselling psychologist as profound and all-encompassing. For co-researchers this affects self and the perception of others with active choice exercised over aspects of one's existence; this leads to greater authenticity. A different view of the nature of self and existence opens up for co-researchers through the development of awareness.

The transformation into a counselling psychologist is constituted by the illuminating effect anxiety has on the human condition which alters how human existence is perceived. For co-researchers reflection on the personal experience of anxiety leads to an awareness of the idiosyncratic manifestation of anxiety; this offers a possible understanding of how this is experienced in others. A link to others through the shared experience of anxiety occurs which represents a change in the previously held view of others and self. Sam provides a view of how anxiety provides a connection to others, as follows:

Extract 30

I do think that some anxiety can be productive, so there's a little bit of both there, but ultimately I have to say, I think it's probably helpful because those emotions that you feel are just what everyone feels at some point in their life.

Through her personal experience of anxiety there is a transformation in how she perceives anxiety as a general condition of human existence. This therefore offers the basis of a shared

experience and the possibility of the development of empathy which is a constituent of what it means to be a counselling psychologist.

4.6. Conclusion

Through applying the existential phenomenological approach to the interview data the structures identified in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety consist of: 1) Becoming as imagined, 2) Confrontation with a different reality, 3) The struggle of becoming and 4) The emergence and transformation into a counselling psychologist. These structures of becoming a counselling psychologist with regard to the experience of anxiety will be summarised below.

Becoming as imagined is situated in time with the meaning of becoming and being a counselling psychologist projected into the future. This perspective is based on current expectations and assumptions and exists as a potentiality in the mind of the co-researcher as something yet-to-be-fulfilled. The image or idea of what it means to become a counselling psychologist occurs for co-researchers through an amalgamation of profession-specific mores intersecting with idiosyncratic features of the individual. The expectations related to self, world and others in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist structure the co-researcher's participation in the training course; meaning and significance of what will be embarked on is experienced affectively and bodily through anxiety.

The confrontation with a different reality to the one which was imagined is characterised by a high degree of novelty and ambiguity which represents a departure from what was imagined. For co-researchers anxious experiencing occurs through the disjuncture between the possibilities which are imagined and have been projected into the future and the actuality. The disjuncture requires the co-researcher to re-negotiate how the self is involved in being-in-the-world with uncertainty extending to how the self will be constituted. Ambiguity in the

confrontation with a different reality extends to what will characterise the essence of what it means to be and become a counselling psychologist.

The struggle to become a counselling psychologist is experienced by co-researchers as strenuous requiring a re-assessment and generation of new understandings related to one's psychological reality. Anxiety is a constituent of the struggle to become as it stimulates an inward-directed stance through the process of reflection by which aspects of self, other and the world are re-considered. Significant anxiety is experienced by co-researchers which is linked to the ambiguity and not knowing which permeates all aspects of self, the world and interactions in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. The focus on internal processes of reflection is experienced by co-researchers as giving rise to learning and self-awareness.

The transformation into a counselling psychologist is structurally composed of growth with this characteristic constituted through time by moving into the future. Aspects of self, world and others located in the past are juxtaposed by co-researchers and compared in the present. For co-researchers the difference between the two highlight a sense of growth through progression and change. Growth occurs for co-researchers in two broad areas namely personal and professional development with change in one constituting and affecting change in the other. These changes influence how interactions with others and the world are experienced. For co-researchers the processes of anxiety, reflection and learning culminate in self-awareness which are considered to be major achievements in the transformation into counselling psychologist. Self-awareness is considered a structural component of the transformation into a counselling psychologist with this process leading to profound personal changes which are illuminated by and intersect with existential questions about the human condition; this provides a new authentic way of being-in-the-world. Through choice the co-researcher is able to shape their existence through the actualisation of possibilities.

Therefore the findings suggest that the process of becoming a counselling psychologist through the lens of anxiety is arduous and painful, with profound personal changes taking place in the transformation. Transformation was reported as taking place with reference made to existential concerns; this became evident through self-reflection. Furthermore, co-researchers found that on encountering the training process a re-evaluation of taken-for-granted assumptions about the self and world was required; the dissonance between expectations and the reality was experienced as anxiety-provoking. As a result of the ambiguity experienced when embarking on the training process an opening up of possibilities related to the project of becoming occurred for co-researchers. Through the experience of anxiety which is a constituent of the struggle to become a counselling psychologist, co-researchers engaged in personal analysis and reflection. These are key processes in facilitating learning and the acquisition of therapeutic knowledge. Through anxious experiencing greater attention was directed to the self leading to an increase in self-awareness; this was identified as a constituent of the transformation into counselling psychologist.

5.1. INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter the implications of the findings of this study for the trainee experience and the profession of Counselling Psychology are discussed. This study was interested in exploring how trainees experience the process of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety. The findings reported in Chapter Four will be discussed in relation to previous research highlighting the possible contribution made in this area of therapeutic education. The researcher's involvement in co-constituting the findings in this study is considered by addressing my personal and methodological reflexivity. A critique of the Existential-Empirical Phenomenological method used in this study is also offered in terms of the benefits and constraints of employing this analytic gaze. In conclusion, areas for future research will be suggested in relation to the overall findings of this study.

This research was informed by three aims, identified from a critical analysis of the extant literatures on counsellor development models, anxiety in trainee counsellors and personal and professional development. These aims were as follows 1). To understand and identify how counselling psychology trainees make sense of and experience their development into counselling psychologists; 2). To understand how anxiety is implicated in the growth and development into a counselling psychologist; 3). Through the use of an existential-phenomenological framework to promote an alternative perspective to the dominant medical model of anxiety specifically in relation to the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. The overarching focus of this research was to study how the process of becoming a counselling psychologist is experienced and made sense of. This is in keeping with the emphasis on consciousness, subjectivity and lived experience which Manafi (2010) suggests are key features of counselling psychology inquiry.

5.2. The implications of the main findings of this study

The main findings identified in Chapter Four were as follows: Firstly, that Becoming as imagined was based on expectations and assumptions of what it would mean to be and become a counselling psychologist. Secondly, the Confrontation with a different reality involved a high degree of novelty. Thirdly, that the Struggle to become was experienced through anxiety where aspects of the psychological reality were re-considered. Fourthly, the Transformation into a counselling psychologist involved personal and professional growth, where greater authenticity gave rise to new meanings about the nature of human existence. These will be discussed in relation to their implications for relevant literatures cited in Chapter Two.

5.2.1. How accounts of anxiety feature in “becoming a counselling psychologist”

The co-constituted nature of anxiety in becoming

There has been some research investigating the themes and processes which occur during professional training, with anxiety found to be prevalent in this experience; this is highlighted in the Introduction and Literature Review chapters of this thesis. The findings of this study have identified that anxiety is pervasive in doctoral counselling psychology training. In ‘becoming as imagined’, ‘confrontation with a different reality’ and the ‘struggle of becoming’ anxiety occurs in relation to and in the interaction with others and the training environment. The anxiety experienced by co-researchers was therefore not disconnected from context.

In the literature on counsellor development models (Grater, 1985, Friedman & Kaslow, 1986, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992) and research into the stresses of psychotherapy and psychology training (Cushway, 1992, Nutt-Williams et al. 1998, Brooks et al. 2002, Davies, 2008) anxiety is conceptualised as a purely intrapsychic and person-specific phenomenon. Brooks et al. (2002) identified the personality-style of the trainee as implicated in the experience of anxiety, whilst Nutt-Williams et al. (1997) identified the personal ability to manage counter-transference as influential in determining whether anxiety occurred or not. Whilst still focusing on the

intrapsychic nature of anxiety, Cushway (1992) noted that the coping skills of the trainee played a part in whether anxiety was managed effectively. The findings of this study highlight this limited view of anxiety by identifying that anxiety does not occur in isolation but is co-constituted in dialogue with the world in specific contexts.

Context is an important consideration when undertaking research which focuses on the uniqueness of individual experience. In counselling psychology, context is emphasised (BPS, 2007) as a means of respecting difference and avoiding reductionist claims. In this study the anxiety which occurred in becoming a counselling psychologist was experienced by co-researchers as contextualised; meaning was created in the dialogue between anxious experiencing and the unknown and ambiguous environmental context. There is some support for this finding in Davies' (2008) study where the anxiety experienced by psychoanalytic trainees was made sense of by referring to the influence of institutional conditions operative within the training organisation. Therefore in 'becoming as imagined', in the 'confrontation with a different reality' and the 'struggle to become' co-researchers anxiety and the context were co-constituted by one another in a reciprocal way. As a result the findings of this study move away from an understanding of anxiety as a purely intrapsychic experience to one which occurs in interaction with the environment. The notion of the inter-related nature of the environment and the person acting on and constituting one another is in keeping with an existentially informed approach and rejects notions of influence being uni-directional.

The factors which constitute what it means to become and be a counselling psychologist are self-defined. When anxiety and the process of becoming a counselling psychologist are considered from an existential perspective growth and development can be considered with reference to authenticity. For these co-researchers it was through reflection on anxiety and the unique meaning this had in relation to learning, that growth and development could be personally constructed and directed; this allowed for the possibility of becoming an authentic counselling psychologist through the experience of anxiety. This finding is supported in the literature where Kirkland-Handley (2002) speaks of the educative value of anxiety; through

embracing this experience one can move forward to actualise one's possibilities and live more authentically. Similarly Van Deurzen (1997) asserts that it is through awareness of anxiety that true human existence can be achieved. For these co-researchers anxiety disclosed the personal significance of what it meant to become a counselling psychologist and the unique characteristics associated with this transformation such as the shared condition of anxiety; this encouraged the development of the therapeutic skill of empathy.

The findings of this study suggest that much is to be gained from conceptualising anxiety as a beneficial experience in facilitating the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. Strawbridge (2001) highlights that promoting such a view encourages an empowering stance which is in keeping with counselling psychology's philosophy. The findings of this study offer a view of anxiety as positive in facilitating the growth into a counselling psychologist. This finds support in what Orlans and Van Scoyoc (2009) suggest is counselling psychology's stance of moving away from conceptions of anxiety as an illness towards a promotion of well-being. Anxiety is considered as opening up the possibility of choice and agency in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. As a result co-researchers were able use the personal experience of anxiety to shape what it personally meant to become a counselling psychologist rather than imposing an externally-derived template. Therefore due to the positive value anxiety had in this process it is suggested that anxiety can be re-conceptualised as facilitative to deep, personal learning in becoming a counselling psychologist. This position can be seen as moving away from a psychopathological discourse of anxiety which limits the understanding of this experience to a disorder requiring treatment and elimination. It is suggested that the findings of this study assist in furthering the view of anxiety as a crucial experience which can be engaged with in the process of becoming an authentic counselling psychologist. As a result of emphasising the beneficial aspects of anxiety in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist a non-pathologising view of anxiety is put forward.

5.2.2. Becoming as actively co-constituted through the environment

Becoming a counselling psychologist can be seen as co-constituted through the interaction with the world. Co-researchers in this study reported their experiences of becoming a counselling psychologist through their active participation and negotiation with the lived world. Through participation in the course co-researchers experienced an increase in inner strength, development of insight and the acquisition of therapeutic skill and knowledge. As a result of experiencing aspects of the course in a personal way and interpreting the significance of this to the notion of becoming a counselling psychologist, co-researchers re-constructed aspects of their self-experience in relationship with the environment. The unique subjectivity of the co-researchers defined which elements of the course would be applied to self in becoming a counselling psychologist. The findings in this study support a holistic conceptualisation of human beings found within counselling psychology which Woolfe, Dryden and Strawbridge (2007) identify as rejecting dichotomies like self/ other or subject/ object. The views proposed by Sugarman (2010) in relation to the life-course perspective are supported by this study, specifically that person-environment transactions are integral in the process of development. Therefore the findings of this study support the contention that the development into a counselling psychologist is constituted through the interaction with the environment; this study therefore adds to the body of literature which rejects false dichotomies between self/ other and internal/ external.

5.2.3. The struggle of “becoming” illustrated through notions of time, expectations and ambiguity.

Counsellor and psychotherapist development models describe the processes which characterise trainee development. Studies such as those formulated by Loganbill et al. (1982), Yogev (1982), Grater (1985), Friedman and Kaslow (1986) and Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992a, 1992b) are based on certain assumptions which inform how development is understood. These assumptions refer to notions of linearity, invariant stages and the person as passively influenced by the environment. The existential-phenomenological philosophy which underpins this study assumes a different stance from those identified in the previously cited

examples especially in relation to the notion and experience of time. As a function of the different assumptions relating to how the self and life-world are conceptualised, 'becoming as imagined' and the meaning attached to this with reference to time are considered. This departs from the linear view of time and development which are implicit in most models of counsellor development.

5.2.3 i: Time

The dimension of time was important for these co-researcher-trainees as a means of constructing how becoming occurred prior to embarking on the training. For co-researchers in this study, becoming had already been anticipated and projected into the future prior to starting the course; the possibilities of what would constitute becoming had in some ways already been defined. Heidegger (1962) noted that human beings are fundamentally temporal with a drive towards self-definition occurring through projecting possibilities into the future. This assertion can be seen to support the findings of this study as co-researchers through projecting themselves into the future identified characteristics which would define self as a counselling psychologist. This finding however departs from the models of development constructed by Loganbill et al. (1982), Grater (1985) Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) which offer views of development as linear and hierarchical. These findings therefore suggest that the constructions of what would constitute becoming were carried into the future through imagination and experienced in the present as expectations. These expectations were important as they influenced to some extent what possibilities would define becoming and against which growth would be measured. These conceptions involving how time was understood as intimately connected to the self of the co-researcher influenced how the course, self and others were experienced in becoming a counselling psychologist.

5.2.3. ii Expectations

The literature considers that expectations play an important role in the experience trainees have during the professional training process (Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992, 2003, Truett,

2001). This study supports the assertion that expectations are a significant experience in the process of becoming a counselling psychologist. This is noted in the 'becoming as imagined' and 'struggle to become' aspects of becoming a counselling psychologist. It was found that anxiety occurred for co-researchers when expectations were disappointed. This finding is supported in the literature by Truell, 2001, Skovholt & Rønnestad, 2003 and Rizq, 2006. The effect of disappointed expectations on becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to being-in-the-world is considered in greater detail below.

In 'becoming as imagined' co-researchers developed expectations of self, world and others prior to the start of the course which anticipated the future; these were found to structure imagined interactions. In the 'confrontation with a different reality' a disjuncture occurred when the reality did not match up to expectations with this affecting co-researchers in an embodied way through cognitions, affect and behaviour. Co-researchers experienced the negation of expectations relating to becoming, the course and others as giving rise to uncertainty and anxiety. Therefore through interaction with the course, co-researchers experienced ontological instability with the possibilities defining becoming and being described as uncertain. This finding is in agreement with Heidegger's (1927/1962) conceptualisation of anxiety as an awareness of the necessity of choice, with the outcome characterised by uncertainty. This study highlights that the process of becoming and being a counselling psychologist involves uncertainty through the negation of expectations which can be experienced as ontological instability by the trainee co-researcher.

The process of becoming a counselling psychologist is constituted by expectations in relation to others. In this study it was found that co-researchers changed in idiosyncratic ways through interactions with others which was negotiated within a relational context. Co-researchers found that relationships with others departed from expectations giving rise to anxiety. As a result of this the self in relationship with others was experienced as uncertain. In the 'struggle to become' co-researchers experienced becoming a counselling psychologist as ambiguous and unknown which became evident in relationship with others. This finding links in with notions of

intersubjectivity and the relational which Orlans and Van Scoyoc (2009) suggest lies at the heart of counselling psychology. In this sense becoming occurs in the relationship with an other. Similarly this position converges with existentialism with Cohn (1997) noting that relatedness is a primary state of being. These findings are valuable as they depart from the view proposed by previous studies most notably Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992, 2003) and Truett (2001) which suggest that becoming a therapist or psychologist is a predominately solitary phenomenon taking place in isolation from the context.

5.2.3 iii: Ambiguity and learning

Ambiguity was reported as an important experience in the struggles which constituted becoming a counselling psychologist for these co-researchers with this giving rise to anxiety. This finding is supported in the literature by Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992), Pica (1998) and Rizq (2006) who found that ambiguity in training to become a counsellor was associated with anxiety. However an important departure from these studies relates to the assumptions around how ambiguity occurs in the context of becoming a counselling psychologist. This departure is encapsulated by what Cohn (1997, p.15) describes as implying that a 'simple one-way reaction to the world' exists. Co-researchers experienced ambiguity when assumptions and expectations relating to self, world and others were negated. As a result the characteristics of what would constitute becoming were perceived as uncertain and requiring re-negotiation. This lead co-researchers to find new ways of interacting with others which served as a form of learning. Co-researchers were stimulated through this process to experiment with engaging in novel ways with the other and the environment; new meanings were constructed in this manner. In this regard the creative potential of unknowing is discussed by Cayne and Loewenthal (2007) who suggest that it has the potential to open up new ways of engaging. Therefore the potential of learning as a result of ambiguity is supported by the findings in this study. These findings add support to the critique of traditional educational approaches which focus exclusively on known aspects of learning and behavioural goals to the detriment of learning which occurs in a relational context and which Cayne and Loewenthal (2007) note

involves unknowing. The potential of learning arising from the experience of ambiguity is highlighted by the findings of this study.

5.3.2 iv: Ambiguity and pluralism

The findings of this study support previously identified research (Rizq, 2006, Lewis, 2008, Orlans & Van Scoyoc, 2009 and McAteer, 2010) which identifies pluralism as a source of ambiguity and anxiety for co-researchers. The experience of anxiety and ambiguity was prevalent for co-researchers as a result of the multiplicity of theories and the emphasis on the development of competence. For co-researchers ambiguity affected how the self would be constituted in relation to the other as a result of working within different therapeutic modalities, with this giving rise to anxiety. In this regard the use of self is particularly important in the therapeutic encounter (Lane & Corrie, 2006, Lewis, 2008); this converges with issues of competence and how the self of the trainee-co-researcher can be used in a clear and coherent way. The intersection of pluralism and the push towards acquiring clinical competence gave rise to anxiety that co-researchers would damage clients or not be 'good enough'. This finding is supported in the literature by Glickauf-Hughes and Mehlman (1995) who found that trainees struggled with fears of not being 'good enough'. However the findings of this study extend the understanding of how development takes place in the face of ambiguity. Through the relationship with the environment and clients, co-researchers defined their subjectivity through the meanings they attached to pluralism and therapeutic competence. Greater authenticity was achieved through confronting ambiguity and developing new meanings of competence. Through interaction with others and the confrontation with ambiguity co-researchers generated new meanings attached to competence which defined how the self of the co-researcher in relation with others was experienced.

Co-researchers experienced anxiety through balancing the competing demands of competence and pluralism which influenced how becoming was constituted. The tension between the conflicting positions of postmodernism and the culture of competence (Rizq, 2006) seen in

higher education influence the experience of the trainee. Orlans and Van Scoyoc (2009) reiterate this and note that it undermines trainee's confidence and sense of authority which paradoxically is a 'competence' required by the UK Quality Assurance Agency. The significance these findings have is to increase awareness especially in relation to course providers and trainers that the potential exists for trainees to experience considerable anxiety in balancing the competing drives of a pluralistic value base and acquiring a sense of competence. It is suggested that trainers collaboratively discuss the challenges and ambiguities of pluralistic practice as a means of preparing trainees. It is recommended that the provision of a forum where the challenges and ambiguities of a pluralistic value base could be discussed would be a useful and supportive addition to counselling psychology training courses.

Thus it is suggested that a more nuanced understanding of the meaning of ambiguity as lived by the trainee has been proposed by this study. This study makes a contribution to understanding how trainee counselling psychologists develop during the training course with reference to the experience of ambiguity. Insights into this process are arrived at through the application of an existential-phenomenological framework. In this way the findings highlighted that co-researchers struggled to find the 'right' theory to apply to therapeutic practice. Through making sense of the ambiguity and how this affected them and their relations with clients they were able to find a creative way of working which felt authentic. Growth in this area was seen as taking place in a relational way. It is highlighted that trainee-co-researchers were not passively acted upon by the environment but were actively involved in making sense of and reconstructing ambiguity in a personally meaningful way. It was through this process that co-researcher's subjectivity was altered in the direction of *becoming* and being a counselling psychologist. This position moves away from the narrow conceptualisation of the trainee's behaviour and practice as caused by the training environment towards a view which Spinelli (2006) describes as interdependent.

5.2.4. Becoming constituted through learning and development competencies

The process of becoming a counselling psychologist implies a holistic and integrated process. However in the literature counsellor development is categorised according to personal and professional development with discrete skills and competencies identified in each of these areas. It has been suggested that separation of these areas is useful to aide clarity or as Johns (1996) suggests for semantic and training reasons. However it has been identified by Donati and Watts (2005) that they are not mutually exclusive processes and that 'there is no clear separation between the two facets of development, they are mutually dependent' (Wilkins, 1997, p.5). Skovholt and Rønnestad (1996) identify an underlying developmental process which they termed 'professional individuation' to take into consideration the intertwined nature of personal and professional aspects of functioning. Based on the findings of this study aspects of the developmental process involved in becoming a counselling psychologist are considered to be reflection, awareness and experiential learning. These will be discussed below in relation to the literature as it relates to the findings with relevant implications identified.

5.2.4. i: Reflection

Through the use of an existential-phenomenological approach the personal features which facilitated changes in becoming a counselling psychologist occurred through the process of reflection. In this study co-researchers described reflection as stimulating changes, these were interpreted as constituting what it meant to become a counselling psychologist. This finding is supported by Boyd and Fales (1983, p. 100) who posit that it is through the act of reflection on experience that a clarification of meaning occurs in terms of self resulting in a 'changed conceptual perspective'. However the findings of the current study extend this assertion through noting the important role anxiety has in the process of reflection and change. Co-researchers described the experience of anxiety as stimulating an inward-looking, reflective stance to self, this changed how the self and self-in-relation were experienced. The process of reflection was described by co-researchers as meditative and analytic, giving rise to a discovery-oriented approach to the self, world and others. Through questioning aspects of self, one's personal history and belief system co-researchers were involved in what Rizq (2006, p.

620) describes as a 'maximally self-reflexive stance'. In this way how the self of the trainee-co-researcher was involved in being-in-the-world and in interactions with others was acknowledged. This finding links in with the reflective-practitioner paradigm which is embedded in counselling psychology (BPS, 2004) which highlights the requirement for reflecting on practice. Therefore the findings of this study identify that anxiety stimulates the process of reflecting on self, world or others. It is an active process and represents an altered way of engaging with one's psychological reality. As a result the past, present and future were actively re-constructed through reflection with this leading to learning and growth for the co-researchers.

5.2.4: ii: Reflection as learning/ skill

Reflection is considered to be an important learning tool by Wilkins (1997) which is supported by the findings of this study. Through the process of reflection co-researchers described growth as taking place in self-knowledge, the acquisition of therapeutic knowledge and techniques. This finding is supported in the literature with Lewis (2008) suggesting that trainers consider reflection on self as an indication of development. The concepts of reflection-in-action and reflection-on-action posited by Schön (1983, 1987) offer some support to the findings of this study especially that knowledge acquisition and learning occurs through reflection on the therapeutic encounter. This was described by co-researchers as reflection on the self situated in the immediate present or past with reference to an event, experience or behaviour. Through this process of reflection the meaning of self in interaction with the object, person or experience were transformed for the trainee-co-researchers. However an important aspect which the findings of this study highlight which is neglected in Schön's (1983, 1987) model is the central role of self in the learning process. In this regard the role and use of self is emphasised by counselling psychology (Lane & Corrie, 2006). Through reflection on self in the therapeutic encounter with clients, co-researchers were able to modulate their behaviour in response to the interaction with the client; this was experienced as a source of learning and change to self. This is supported in the literature with Hart and Kogan (2003) stating that continual reflection on who we are in the therapeutic process is an important aspect of learning to be an effective

counselling psychologist. In this way learning about self, other and the self in-relation to others occurred for trainee-co-researchers through reflection; this can be seen as giving primacy to the relational context in which learning occurs. In addition this study suggests that reflection is also a source through which change and growth to self occurs.

5.2.4 iii: Awareness

In this study increasing awareness was considered to be central to becoming a counselling psychologist. For co-researchers awareness was experienced in relation to self; this facilitated a more central role of the self in apportioning meaning in a conscious and active way. Awareness was described by co-researchers as bringing to light aspects of self which were previously unknown or vague. For co-researchers it was through anxiety that self-awareness and growth was achieved; co-researchers reflected on the personal experience of anxiety with this increasing self-awareness and understanding. Therefore this finding is supported in the literature with Tudor and Worrall (1994) identifying that self-awareness is central in the assimilation of sensory and visceral experiences and the development of perception.

Becoming a counselling psychologist is constituted by an increase in self-awareness and is characterised by greater choice and authenticity. Co-researchers experienced awareness as facilitating choice in how they would constitute their existence and the individual features defining what it would mean to become a counselling psychologist. For co-researchers greater authenticity was experienced in being able to define what one would become. This assertion is supported by Rizq (2006) who notes that it is through the development of self-awareness that personal choice and responsibility can take place. The importance of choice and responsibility as factors implicated in authenticity is represented in existential thought (Cohn, 1997, Wyatt, 2001, Van Deurzen, 2002). Self-awareness is posited by Sartre (1947) as drawing attention to the responsibility human beings have in exercising choice; through choice greater authenticity in lived experience and existence is achieved. The findings of this study suggest that co-researchers were able to define and exercise choice over the constituents which would

characterise becoming and being a counselling psychologist. This was made possible through greater self-awareness informing the choices which would actively constitute the transformation and change into a counselling psychologist.

5.4.2. iv: Experiential learning

In the existential-phenomenological approach there is recognition of the relationship and interaction with the world which cannot be separated from the body. For co-researchers learning took place through bodily experiencing in the form of anxiety which lead to the development of empathy. This finding suggests that learning occurs through the body. This assertion is supported by Merleau-Ponty (1962, p. 186) who notes, 'It is through my body that I understand other people, just as it is through my body that I 'perceive' things'. Learning involves emotions with Boud, Cohen and Walker (1993) stating that emotions have a vital role to play in intellectual learning. In this study it was found that the body was of significance as a means by which being-in-the-world was made sense of. This assumption can be seen to move away from the Cartesian dualism where Descartes (1960) proposed a split between the mind and body; this position has dominated much of Western thinking and psychology. In this study the contention was supported that bodily experiencing cannot be divorced from the other more intellectual means through which learning to become a counselling psychologist occurs. Therefore the findings of this study suggest that it is through the bodily experience of anxiety that awareness of what it means to become a counselling psychologist occurs.

Learning through experience occurs in an integrated and holistic way based on active participation with the environment. In becoming a counselling psychologist co-researchers interacted in a dialectical way with the environment and others; this interaction co-constituted the learning which took place. It was found that through reflection on the experience of anxiety and by referring to anxiety as discussed in theoretical frameworks that new meanings were created for co-researchers. As a result these new meanings were experimented with in the therapeutic context leading to further experiencing and giving rise to new learning. The learning

which takes place in this way is described by Boud, et al, (1993) as relational. It is through the active relationship with the environment that the co-researcher constructed and interpreted meaning. In this study it was found that learning and experiencing required co-researchers to participate in the therapeutic encounter in a different way which lead to change in self. This is supported in the literature by Boud and Walker (1993, p. 71) who speak of the transformational quality attached to experiential learning; they suggest that learning from experience does not just involve accumulating new knowledge but 'transforms our way of experiencing'. The co-researcher in direct involvement with the environment and others constructed learning in a dialectical way; in this way the self of the co-researcher was changed into a counselling psychologist based on the unique constituents of the experiential learning which took place.

Concepts such as reflection, self-awareness and experiential learning implicate the importance of the lived world in the learning process which constitutes becoming a counselling psychologist. Through the experience of anxiety which promotes a reflective stance, co-researchers became aware of how the self interacted with others; this reflection on self in relation to others facilitated a process of change. The self is transformed and co-constituted through reflection on the therapeutic process and relationship; becoming occurs within a relational context. Self-awareness and an increase in knowledge of self were experienced as constituting the meaning attached to becoming a counselling psychologist. Through anxiety an opening to learning to become an authentic counselling psychologist took place which links in with notions of how experiential learning is posited to take place. The findings of this study therefore extend the understanding of how trainee-co-researchers experience the process of becoming counselling psychologists with reference to an existential-phenomenological framework. The attitudes and skills which compose reflection, self awareness and experiential learning occur within a context and are constituted through interactions arising from being-in-the-world; these processes are not viewed as discrete or purely intrapsychic phenomena.

5.3. Personal and methodological reflexivity

In phenomenological research the possibility of objective research and observation is rejected. Empirical-existential phenomenological research assumes that an indissoluble relationship exists between the co-researcher and researcher, with Spinelli (2005) suggesting that both co-constitute one another. The manner in which the researcher's subjectivity influenced the research findings will now be considered.

The interest in studying the process of becoming a counselling psychologist is informed by the researcher's position namely as a trainee counselling psychologist currently completing her training. During training the researcher experienced varying levels of anxiety which lead to an interest in how other trainees might experience and make sense of the phenomenon of becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to anxiety. The methodology and epistemology which were subscribed to in this study were influenced by two aspects namely the researcher's interest in existentialist and phenomenological thought deriving from her undergraduate study in philosophy and the core relational philosophy subscribed to by the researcher's counselling psychology training course. As a result of reflection prior to and throughout the research process many of the researcher's operative assumptions were made explicit thereby allowing for an open attitude to be maintained in respect of the current research. Additionally this would assist in allowing for the emergence of new meanings in co-researchers accounts.

In empirical-existential phenomenological research the subjectivity of the researcher is inevitably involved. Giorgi (1994, p. 205) suggests that elimination of subjectivity is not an option 'rather how the subject is present is what matters'. Therefore to clarify the presence of the researcher and to manage preconceptions which may bias the appearance of the phenomenon during the research process Finlay (2008) suggests the use of reflexivity; this involves a self-aware examination of assumptions held by the researcher. In a self-interview conducted at the outset of the research process the researcher identified a preconception that

the process of becoming a counselling psychologist necessarily always involved anxiety. Awareness of this assumption and the subsequent bracketing of it facilitated the ability to be open to the phenomenon of becoming a counselling psychologist. This openness to new meanings was reflected in the advertisement stating that the area of interest was “The process of becoming a counselling psychologist and the stresses involved.” The language used in the advertisement most notably the term ‘stresses’ reflected the everyday naive language which Giorgi (1976) suggests forms the basis of a good descriptive account. Therefore through reflection on the subjectivity of the researcher, preconceptions became evident which facilitated an open stance to be adopted towards the phenomenon of becoming a counselling psychologist.

A primary aim of the phenomenological interview is identified by Polkinghorne (1989) as the description and comprehension of the central themes being described by the co-researcher. However, although Giorgi’s (1985) method emphasises the researcher’s subjectivity in the research process he does not identify how this is implicated in the interviewing process. During the interviews it became evident that as a result of the sensitive subject matter which was being explored, the nature of the interaction between the researcher and co-researchers at times appeared reminiscent of a therapeutic session. As a result, there appeared to be an overlap between the role of researcher and therapist during the interviews. This observation is elaborated on by Wosket (1999) who notes that the line between counselling and research may become indistinct. Whilst Grafanaki (1996) has pointed to the similarities which exist between the nature and quality of the therapeutic alliance and research alliance; a trusting relationship is required for gathering data which is authentically grounded in co-researcher’s experiences and mirrors the therapist-client relationship. At times this presented a difficulty to the researcher in relation to maintaining the researcher role which was experienced as more detached and the therapeutic role which involved the researcher in a more direct and empathic way. Therefore as a result of Giorgi (1985) providing little guidance on the interviewing process this presented some difficulties to the researcher in relation to how the subjectivity of the researcher was used in the interview process.

During the analysis of the protocols and the development of the situated and general structural descriptions the researcher had to remain cognisant of making unfounded inferences about relationality and anxiety in the co-researchers accounts. During the analysis stage the phenomenological reductions altered the researcher's presence in such a way that theoretical preoccupations were released; this facilitated an open-minded stance towards the experience being studied. The emphasis on imaginative variation in the empirical phenomenological method assisted in making these inferences explicit through actively experimenting with the limits of the phenomenon. The researcher found that through varying aspects of the phenomenon the structure of the phenomenon was clarified which allowed for the researcher to 'see' the phenomenon as described more clearly. Additionally through maintaining a reflexive awareness and assuming a position of deliberate naiveté (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) it was possible to maintain an open stance to the phenomenon being studied. As a result of these steps, the possibility of bias and preconceptions were reduced thereby allowing for the phenomenon to become evident in its own terms.

Similarities between the co-researchers and the researcher such as the shared trainee role and counselling psychology knowledge base potentially influenced the subsequent interviews and findings in key ways. The researcher is a trainee counselling psychologist and five of the seven co-researchers were trainees, with two co-researchers qualifying in the preceding year. The existence of a shared experience was a source of commonality and connection which helped to establish rapport. In this regard Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) draw attention to the importance of establishing good contact as a means of encouraging co-researchers to describe their lives and worlds. During the interviews the researcher sought to develop good relationships with the co-researchers which provided in-depth descriptions of the phenomena in question. However a shared professional knowledge base and similar roles and training experiences of the researcher and co-researchers had the potential to obscure meanings with this shared 'know-how' described by Polanyi (1969, 1967) as 'tacit knowledge'. Reflection on the first interview provided evidence for the presence of tacit knowledge and shared assumptions. Several times

in the first interview descriptions were cut short with statements made suggesting that further elaboration wasn't needed as the researcher must have had similar experiences. Reflection on the first interview altered the researcher's stance to subsequent interviews most notably in the form of requesting clarification on vague descriptions or seemingly self-evident statements. In conclusion the shared roles and professional knowledge base of the researcher and co-researcher was positive as it allowed for rapport to develop and through the subsequent awareness derived from reflection on interviews, in-depth descriptions were provided by the co-researchers.

It is important to acknowledge an empathic awareness of the phenomenon under investigation in phenomenology especially as it allows for meanings from co-researchers to become apparent to the researcher in a fuller and richer way. This notion of empathy is used to describe the quality of relating between the researcher and co-researcher with Churchill (1991, p. 15) clarifying this as 'direct existential contact'. In this way the co-researcher can become acquainted with the essence of the phenomenon as lived by the co-researcher. Phenomenology as a Human Science requires what Gillett (1995, p.112) describes as an 'empathic imaginative identification with the subject'. It was considered that through the personal experience the researcher had with the topic under study that this would allow her to empathically identify with the co-researchers both during interviews and in the analysis stage where creative insights were generated. There was a concern that 'over-rapport' (Atkinson, Coffey & Delamont, 2003) or over-identification with the co-researchers could hinder the phenomena coming directly into view both during the interview and analysis stages. To guard against this the self interview and the phenomenological reduction were used as a means of maintaining an awareness of the researcher's material and that of the co-researchers. The tensions of remaining highly open to what was being communicated by the co-researchers whilst avoiding over-identification remained at the forefront of the researcher's mind and it was through ongoing critical awareness of her own preconceptions that it was possible to focus on the meanings of the situations given by the co-researchers.

5.4. Limitations of empirical-existential phenomenological approach

Phenomenology as a descriptive approach has been criticised as returning to introspectionism (Giorgi, 1985). This criticism however would appear to be based on erroneous understandings of the methods and differing emphases of these two approaches. For the phenomenological psychologist objects and meanings are of crucial importance whereas with introspectionist reports, impressions of sensory experiences of various stimuli are analysed. Introspectionist approaches are concerned with issues of subjectivity, whereas Spinelli (2005) notes that phenomenology asserts the primacy of inter-relatedness in the world with consciousness seen as giving rise to the emergence of subjectivity and unique lived experience.

A possible further limitation of the phenomenological approach is the role played by language in the construction of reality. Phenomenological research is a descriptive approach (Giorgi, 1985) which relies on verbal accounts from co-researchers of their experience of a particular phenomenon. Therefore language is the means through which co-researchers communicate their experiences. In phenomenology there is an assumption that language is sufficient for co-researchers to depict their experiences in an accurate way. However it can be argued that language constructs rather than describes reality and that the words used by co-researchers always constructs a particular version of reality; it is noted that this makes access to someone else's experience impossible. Willig (2008, p.67) suggests that as a result phenomenology does not take into account the 'constitutive role' of language in how experience is constructed. Therefore the effect of this position on phenomenological inquiry might be that rather than reflecting and describing reality through language, it is assumed that reality is constructed through language.

5.5. Directions for future research

5.5.1. Anxiety

The findings of the current study identify how co-researchers defined their subjectivity *in relation* to others and the environment and that this took place on the basis of the experience of ambiguity. Therefore based on the link between the experience of ambiguity and being-in-relation which the current study discusses it may be interesting to conduct further research into how this phenomenon is experienced by trainees with reference to the core philosophy subscribed to by the training course. It may be that a course subscribing to a predominately relational approach which questions the most basic assumptions relating to ethics, professional knowledge and practice may introduce ambiguity (Manafi, 2010) and higher levels of anxiety in trainee counselling psychologists. This could usefully be compared to those courses which subscribe to objectivistic epistemological positions. A Grounded Theory approach informed by Charmaz (2006) would be appropriate as there is currently limited research and theory exploring this issue. Through the use of Grounded Theory new theory would be developed (Creswell, 2007) which would clarify how anxiety may be related to certain epistemological positions.

5.5.2. Pluralism

The difficulties and conflicts between balancing the apparently competing demands of the scientist practitioner/ reflective practitioner models are well documented (Spinelli, 2001, Lane & Corrie, 2006). Rizq (2006) and Lewis (2008) highlight the difficulties trainees experience in working from within divergent philosophies. The findings of the current study confirm this position. However what is lacking is an in-depth description of how working within divergent philosophies is experienced and how this is pragmatically applied in the therapeutic encounter by trainee counselling psychologists. It may be that innovative and novel solutions are found to this dilemma. However with the drive towards competency-based models in universities which only assess a limited number of skills (Berry & Woolfe, 1997) this may be overlooked. It would be important to consider this in detail especially in the light of the other struggles and anxieties

experienced by trainee counselling psychologists involved in the training process. A step in this direction can be seen by the recent study conducted by Ward, Hogan and Menns (2011) on trainee counselling psychologist's experience of integrating a number of different theoretical approaches. They concluded that developing an integrative stance was challenging. How a pluralistic value base impacts on the ability to offer coherent therapy as a trainee counselling psychologist during the training process requires further research. A phenomenological approach such as IPA could be used to generate themes which structure the experience of trainees.

5.6. Overall reflections and conclusions:

The findings of this study highlight the prominent role reflection plays in the process of developing into a counselling psychologist. This finding links in with other research conducted by Skovholt and Rønnestad (1992) suggesting the ubiquity of reflection in professional development. However despite the importance of this there is little understanding of how this process occurs in the developing counselling psychologist. This is especially pertinent given the profession's allegiance to the reflective practitioner paradigm (Legg, 1998). An interesting area of future research would be a phenomenological study of the intentionality of reflection in the development of trainee counselling psychologists. Churchill (1998) conducted an interesting study on the intentionality of psychodiagnostic seeing as a means of facilitating a more disciplined use of this way of approaching and conceptualising diagnosis in clinical contexts. A phenomenological study would provide greater clarity and understanding of how reflection takes place and how it is used by trainee counselling psychologists through their developmental process.

5.7. Final comments

The use of Giorgi's (1983, 1987) empirical-existential phenomenological approach allowed for the meanings attached to becoming a counselling psychologist with reference to the experience of anxiety to be elucidated in an in-depth way. It is through balancing the tensions of the

'existential-phenomenological paradox' (Von Eckartsberg, 1998, p. 15) that it was possible to describe the uniquely individual experience of becoming an authentic counselling psychologist whilst locating this within the broader, more universal developmental process of becoming. There is very little research within the profession of how learning to become a counselling psychologist takes place especially with respect to existential-phenomenological conceptualisations. It is considered that through studying this process within an empirical-existential phenomenological approach that the value base of counselling psychology was respected; the importance of maintaining a link with philosophical heritage underpinning the profession was strengthened whilst offering a unique counselling psychology derived understanding of becoming.

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SCHOOL OF HUMAN AND LIFE SCIENCES

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***PARTICIPANTS NEEDED FOR A STUDY LOOKING AT THE PROCESS OF
BECOMING A COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGIST AND THE STRESSES
INVOLVED.***

TITLE:

How trainee counselling psychologists experience the process of becoming a counselling psychologist and the stresses involved.

I am looking for trainee or early career counselling psychologists to participate in this doctoral study.

- As a participant you will be asked to take part in an interview at a convenient location for approximately 1 hour.
- You will be asked about your experiences of becoming and working as a counselling psychologist and the stresses that this has involved and how you have negotiated and learned from these.

For more information about this study, or to volunteer please contact:

Natalie Loibner

Email: loibnern@roehampton.ac.uk



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Participant consent form

Title of research:

How trainee counselling psychologists experience the process of becoming counselling psychologists and the stresses involved.

Description of project:

This study is designed to explore the ways in which trainee counselling psychologists experience the professional training process.

It is envisaged that approximately 7-9 participants will be interviewed; it is planned that each interview will last 1 hour and will consist of approximately 6 questions being asked which will be audio recorded. The interview will take place at a mutually agreed location.

It is required that you sign this form prior to the start of the interview; by signing this form you are confirming that the following procedures were undertaken to prepare you for the interview.

I confirm that the following information was provided by the Researcher:

1). I have been given the information sheet which informs me what the research interview will involve and the topic areas which will be covered.

- 2). I have had a pre-interview meeting to brief me about the research.
- 3). I am aware that I have the right to stop the interview at any point and to withdraw without giving a reason. I am aware that I can use an ID number as a means of withdrawing from this study.
- 4). I am aware that if I do decide to withdraw from the study that data may still be used or published in an aggregate form.
- 5). The only people who will be permitted to hear this recording are the Researcher, her supervisors and possibly examiners.
- 6). I am aware that every effort will be made to ensure that anonymity is achieved in the transcript of this interview and in any research written up for examination or publications.
- 7). I have been informed of the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines and am aware of the limits of confidentiality.

Signed:_____

Signed:_____

Print name:_____

Researchers name:_____

Researchers details:

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Please note: if you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School (or if the researcher is a student you can contact the Director of Studies.)

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- 5). The only people who will be permitted to hear this recording are the Researcher, her supervisors and possibly examiners.
- 6). I am aware that every effort will be made to ensure that anonymity is achieved in the transcript of this interview and in any research written up for examination or publications.
- 7). I have been informed of the British Psychological Society's ethical guidelines and am aware of the limits of confidentiality.

Signed:_____

Signed:_____

Print name:_____

Researchers name:_____

Researchers details:

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PARTICIPANT DEBRIEFING FORM

ID NUMBER: _____

TITLE OF RESEARCH:

How trainee counselling psychologists experience the process of becoming a counselling psychologist and the stresses involved.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:

This study is designed to explore the ways in which trainee counselling psychologists experience the professional training process.

Having completed this interview, I would be grateful if you could sign to acknowledge the following:

- That this interview was conducted in an ethical and professional manner.
- That I can read and amend the transcript, provided to me by the Researcher.

- That I am assured the analysis for the doctoral thesis and any future publications from this research will maintain my anonymity.
- That the recording of this interview will be destroyed once the research is complete.

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Print name: _____

Researchers

name: _____

Whom to contact for more information:

If any issues have come up for you during the course of this interview that you feel may require further attention please inform the researcher and you will be given additional time to discuss this. You can access further support through The Samaritans on 08457 909090.

Thank you for taking part in this study.

Contact details for researcher:

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Please note: If you have a concern about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise this with the investigator. However if you would like to contact an independent party please contact the Dean of School (or if the researcher is a student you can also contact the Director of Studies.)

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PROTOCOL OF RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. Could you describe in as much detail as possible how you experienced the process of becoming a counselling psychologist?
2. Can you describe the stresses and anxieties you may have felt during this process?
3. Can you describe in as much detail as possible how you understand and experienced personal growth during the training process?
4. Can you describe in as much detail as possible how you understand and experienced professional growth during the training process?
5. Can you describe how you made sense of the process of training to become a counselling psychologist?

APPENDIX E

DATA ANALYSIS: LAUREN

MEANING UNITS	Meaning that dominates MU; expressing implicit Ψ meaning explicitly (Polkinghorne) 1 st transformation	RELATING MU TO PHENOMENON through imaginative variation and reflection (What is the process of becoming & how is it accomplished?)
<p>1. 1I remember feeling incredibly excited to 2be getting started definitely feeling like 3right this is the first of me moving forward 4and no longer me being the assistant 5psychologist I can now be the trainee. So 6a nice feeling of progression.</p> <p>2. 7Sense of achievement of yeah I've got on 8to this course, a real sense of purpose 9that I had which was good.</p> <p>3. 10I think a huge amount of apprehension 11as well like Oh my God what have I let 12myself in for, what is this all going to be 13about, I think being very curious to 14know what the other course mates are 15going to be like.</p> <p>4. 16I spent some time <u>comparing</u> myself to 17other people so it was very important for 18me to see the kind of <u>calibre of the</u> 19<u>other</u> students, what experiences 20they've had, what have they done. So 21maybe a bit <u>worried</u> that I might meet 22people who weren't experienced and</p>	<p>1. Starting the course generated a sense of excitement to the extent that it represented a progression from one role to another more valuable role.</p> <p>2. Acceptance onto the course elicited feelings of pride as it was considered an achievement and it stimulated a sense of purpose.</p> <p>3. Apprehension appeared in the context of uncertainty about what the course would involve and a curiosity around how she would experience the other trainees.</p> <p>4. The quality of the course was important for her which she measured through comparison to other trainees level of experience and competence; quality was a means of validating her own clinical experience.</p>	<p>1. Moving forward into a more valued role evoked a feeling of excitement.</p> <p>2. Getting on to the course represented an achievement and it gave her a sense of meaning.</p> <p>3. The feeling of apprehension and a curious attitude occurred for her in not knowing what the course would involve or what characteristics other trainees would have.</p> <p>4. Comparison to other trainees as a means of validating and valuing her own experiences and choices; apprehension and uncertainty experienced around the course being adequate to fulfil her standards.</p>

<p>23then in some way that would <u>invalidate</u> 24my <u>reasons</u> for being there if that 25makes any sense? So I think I have a 26real worry that I would be on a <u>course</u> 27that <u>wasn't right for me</u>. And all this 28working towards getting on to the 29course was nothing if there were a 30whole lot of people there with not that 31much experience and then Oh my God 32I've <u>spent all these years</u> doing all these 33assistant posts for not much point, so a 34huge <u>mixture of emotions</u> I think in the 35first day.</p> <p>5. 36They were, they really were and I think 37I've managed to keep them under 38wraps for quite a long time and then 39come the first process day when we all 40get together and try and express how 41we feel about being on the course, I 42ended up bawling my eyes out in front 43of people and getting very upset.</p> <p>6. 44I think a lot of it was to do with the fact 45that I <u>always wanted</u> to get onto the 46clinical psychology training. And that 47was the goal and having tried it for a 48quite a few years in a row and having 49interviews but not getting a place I think 50I felt it was something that I needed to 51<u>leave behind</u>, that I needed to get really 52practical about things and be like right 53well you know that's what you wanted to 54do but for some reason it didn't work out 55you need to think about what else you 56can do. And counselling psychology 57seemed like a really good option. But I 58think for me very personally the feeling 59that I had <u>not achieved my primary goal</u></p>	<p>5. Over time she had developed an approach to suppressing her emotions but through the provision of a space where expression of emotion was encouraged within the course she experienced feeling overwhelmed, distressed and tearful.</p> <p>6. The counselling psychology course represented a compromise for her with conflicting emotions being experienced as a result.</p>	<p>5. Her ability to suppress her emotions altered through the environment offered on the course which facilitated the expression of her feelings.</p> <p>6. N/A</p>
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<p>60and this is the secondary goal. So 61there's real mixed emotions there I 62think.</p> <p>7. 63Definitely and I think I still have quite 64mixed emotions about it. Funnily 65enough I can be so practical about 66things and be like my God I love the 67client group so much, I love the 68teaching, I really like my course mates, I 69really value and respect their opinions 70and their experience but underneath it 71all despite all those positives there's still 72that element of almost like grieving for 73not getting on clinical, being like that is 74something I didn't do, that's something I 75didn't achieve and maybe it's 76perfectionist traits if that is something 77that I felt I should have got onto. So it 78made me feel like this course is slightly 79second best for me.</p> <p>8. 80I think it was about wanting to be part of 81a group of people who were very 82experienced and were going to be really 83great professionals coming out of this 84training course and being worried that I 85was with a group of trainees who didn't 86have much experience and who didn't, I 87don't know maybe if they didn't have as 88much experience that would make me 89feel that all that hard work, all that 90struggle was not needed. I could have 91gotten on to the course a couple of 92years ago. And not struggled so much 93and it's been a real, real tough battle for 94so many years. I think as I've been 95struggling so much to get onto clinical 96that every job, everything I've been</p>	<p>7. Her mixed emotions in relation to the course were informative of and reflected her underlying belief and attitude about the course as inferior along with her positive appraisal of the client group, colleagues and teaching quality.</p> <p>8. She was concerned about the calibre of the trainees and the quality of course as these factors would influence her valuation of her own self; other trainee's level of experience could invalidate all her previous struggles and give rise to feelings of meaninglessness.</p>	<p>7. The course represented something which was not good enough for her and she felt wedded to the belief personal failure which arose out of this evaluation.</p> <p>8. Others experienced as formative on her evaluation of self with an ability to confer meaning or meaningless to her experiences.</p>
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<p>97doing has been like striving to do that 98and when you don't get it you're just like 99oh my God why did I need to do that?</p> <p>9. 100And it's easy how you can kid yourself 101into thinking that it's not been difficult. 102And I look back on those times of like 103applying for clinical and getting really 104wound up about it and so stressed out 105about it that I can see now that I 106probably didn't write very good 107application forms because I was so 108stressed.</p> <p>10. 109So there is a part of me that also did 110kind of completely <u>changed my</u> 111<u>attitude</u> is thinking that things happen 112for a reason, you had the bigger 113picture, the bigger kind of view of it is 114that there was something that I wasn't 115doing right which meant that I didn't 116get on to the clinical training and I 117needed to go through some sort of 118<u>process of realisation</u> be that getting 119on to counselling, almost having a bit 120of a <u>mini-breakdown</u> on that process 121day and actually <u>accepting</u> where I am 122and what I'm doing and <u>coming to</u> 123<u>terms</u> with it. And that in turn is making 124me a <u>better psychologist</u> I think.</p> <p>11. 125Mm, I mean that is very strong 126language but I think it's in my way of 127trying to describe really having an <u>eye-</u> 128<u>opener</u>. I think I've been ticking on 129being 'I'm great, I'm great this is going 130to be easy, I'm going to be a great 131psychologist.' But almost not really 132stopping and <u>reflecting</u> about the</p>	<p>9. N/A</p> <p>10. Change occurred for her through a shift in her attitudes; the process of change involved an experience of intense and painful emotions with associated re-evaluation of her circumstances leading to greater acceptance of self, her decisions and future. Her experience of this process of change has resulted in her developing into a better psychologist.</p> <p>11. Greater clarity emerged for her when she experienced a departure from her previous automatic and uncritical stance in relation to her qualities and what and how she would develop. Reflection around how she might be perceived by others and what her personal qualities and stance might be was essential in this process.</p>	<p>9. N/A</p> <p>10. A change of attitude occurred through the experience of a breakdown through which she achieved acceptance of her position and choices; experiencing personal change in this way will positively affect her ability as a psychologist.</p> <p>11. Dwelling on her self and how she was perceived by others through thoughtfulness and reflexivity represented a shift from a previous automaton-like position; this shift of focus was experienced as an epiphany.</p>
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<p>133person I was, the way I was coming 134maybe across and actually stopping 135and thinking about things a bit more 136has been invaluable.</p> <p>12. 137Definitely I think that was definitely 138precipitated by the personal therapy 139for example that you are required to 140look into yourself further than if you 141are on some of the clinical training 142courses I know some of them do 143require personal therapy but not all of 144them and I think counselling 145psychology just asks you to look into 146yourself more and assess the I don't 147know assess yourself more, check 148with your emotions more and also 149assess your impact on other people 150and how you are being seen, so I think 151all that self reflection that occurs more 152in counselling than in clinical I think.</p> <p>13. 153Just simple things like looking into 154process you have, I don't know if you 156have it in your training but we had a 157whole day just dedicated to looking at 158process and thinking more about your 159interaction with other people and 160looking at non-verbal stuff, everything I 161don't know it seems much more time 162to think about that than there is in 163clinical... Maybe I suppose just 164thinking a bit about how you come 165across to other people.</p> <p>14. 166I know it's slightly off point but just the 167very fact that you are asked to stop 168and think about that, all those different 169things that are going on in the room</p>	<p>12. The requirement of personal therapy in counselling psychology training facilitated introspection and thought into her internal world which involved consideration of her emotions and consideration into how she might be perceived by and affect others.</p> <p>13. Through making time available to think about her interpersonal processes and how she was perceived by others through her interaction and non-verbal behaviour these aspects were emphasised in their importance.</p> <p>14. In fulfilling the requirement to direct her attention and thinking to her self as part of the therapeutic process when with a client lead to greater self awareness and realisation.</p>	<p>12. Personal therapy and the counselling psychology profession is felt to require an introspectionist stance where she analysed aspects of her self and experiencing along with how she might be experienced by others.</p> <p>13. Importance is placed on her internal processes along with her style of interaction and behavioural cues and thought on how this conveys aspects of her self to others.</p> <p>14. A requirement to consider subtle factors influencing therapeutic processes which involves analysis of self experienced as ceasing other</p>
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<p>170when you're with <u>someone else</u> might 171be required to the same extent as a 172clinical trainee. So that asks you to 173<u>look at yourself</u> and <u>stop and think a</u> 174<u>bit more</u>. So that it turn may have 175<u>precipitated me thinking</u> 'Oh my God' 176<u>thinking more about myself</u>.</p> <p>15. 177Oh I'm sure they are, I just can't think 178of the time when I noticed it. I 179remember my <u>emotions running high</u> 180in the process day in group with other 181course mates but not with clients.</p> <p>16. 182Anxiety, about <u>not being good enough</u>, 183<u>fear</u> that I'm not on a course that isn't 184good enough, so quite contradictory 185emotions. I think I have a real <u>need to</u> 186<u>want to be the best</u> and to <u>be really</u> 187<u>good</u> and so the <u>idea of failing</u> and not 188getting onto 1 course that I have to 189feel like whatever course I am on is 190good enough, so <u>constant anxiety</u> of is 191this good enough, is this going to 192<u>make me a good psychologist</u>, what 193happens if I come out as a second- 194rate psychologist. That's not ok for me. 195So constant state of like 'oh' anxiety.</p> <p>17. 196I think it's <u>impeded my development</u> 197because I can <u>get so caught up</u> with 198<u>being anxious</u> that I'm <u>not really even</u> 199<u>present</u> in the room sometimes, a total 200mindfulness, I'm not in the here-and- 201now. I could be sitting in a lecture and 202<u>worrying</u>, what would another course, 203what would UCL be teaching, what 204would so and so, what would they be 205doing. So it can be <u>detrimental</u> I think.</p>	<p>15. The heightened experience of emotions occurred during her participation in the course.</p> <p>16. Constant anxiety and fear occurs in relation to the possibility that she will not develop into the best psychologist if she is not on the right or best course; this ambition gives rise to a fear and constant state of anxiety around the perceived uncertainty associated with achieving this goal which is expressed as a need.</p> <p>17. Her experience of anxiety and the resultant feelings of worry around hypothetical comparisons with other courses remove her from her immediate environment with a reduction in her awareness; this process is considered as detrimental to her development.</p>	<p>diversionary activities and a focus on self; these modes of being gave rise to personal realisations and self-knowledge.</p> <p>15. Heightened experience of emotion occurred with interaction with peers.</p> <p>16. Anxiety accompanies how she experiences her self in terms of whether she is achieving her goals of being the best; her self experience is defined by her evaluation of external events as meeting a predefined standard which is accompanied by a constant state of fear that she will not achieve her goals.</p> <p>17. She considers anxiety as detrimental to having full awareness to her present situation with the cognitive activity of worry occupying her attention.</p>
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<p>18. 206And then in some ways I think it can 207be <u>helpful</u> because it <u>motivates</u> me to 208work hard and to <u>make sure</u> that I do 209well. So I think it's also I am <u>very</u> 210<u>aware</u> of when I am <u>becoming anxious</u> 211and to try and really <u>observe it and</u> 212<u>work with it, learn to accept it.</u></p> <p>19. 213Where I feel like it <u>impedes</u> me when 214I'm working with clients because the 215client work it's fantastic that's where I 216feel, a bit cheesy almost a <u>higher</u> 217<u>peace</u>, quite peaceful quiet, <u>just totally</u> 218<u>there</u>, really working, engaging with 219the clients I think it's just in lectures 220but then I feel like this year maybe 221things are going to change a bit. Last 222year was <u>very anxiety ridden</u> and this 223year I feel a <u>lot calmer</u> about things.</p> <p>20. 224Maybe it's a process of once you've 225experienced something you know it's 226the right thing whereas I was <u>fortune-</u> 227<u>telling</u> trying to guess what these 3 228years was going to be like but actually 229now that I've met the lecturers I really 230<u>respect them</u> and I see <u>how much</u> 231<u>experience</u> they have and I see well I 232am <u>learning what I am doing</u> because 233you know this is a good course so I 234think the <u>anxiety</u> I think is going down.</p> <p>21. 235It's about being, being good at what I 236do.</p> <p>22. 237I think it's a real <u>fear</u> of not wanting to</p>	<p>18. Consideration of anxiety as having motivational effects on her has stimulated a greater awareness for her into the state of anxiety and through acceptance of this experience learning occurs for her.</p> <p>19. The occurrence of anxiety is limited for her to lectures as client work gives rise to a peaceful and engaged state. The first year of training was characterised by high levels of anxiety and progressively her anxious experiencing is replaced with a calmer attitude.</p> <p>20. With increasing experience of the course and interactions with the lecturers greater confidence in achieving good outcomes has developed and through increased knowledge of her particular cognitive style along with increased experiential learning she has experienced a reduction in her level of anxiety.</p> <p>21. Importance of being skilled and competent.</p> <p>22. Individual qualities such as her motivation,</p>	<p>18. Anxiety is experienced as motivational through stimulating her to work hard to achieve good outcomes; her vigilance of anxiety and the precursors of anxious experiencing have developed through acceptance of this experience.</p> <p>19. First year experienced with a great deal of anxiety which impaired her with current year eliciting a calmer response.</p> <p>20. She measures learning to have taken place experientially and through experiencing the course and tutors her confidence has increased with the effect of lessening her anxiety levels.</p> <p>21. Anxiety related to the desire to be competent at her profession.</p> <p>22. A powerful drive exists to achieve</p>
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<p>238just to be another psychologist there's 239a real <u>drive</u> I have to want to be a 240<u>really good</u> psychologist, whatever 241good means so to be <u>respected</u>, to 242<u>produce useful work</u>, to <u>write</u> 243<u>something good</u>, I want to be, a good 244psychologist.</p> <p>23. 245I suppose every time that anxiety, 246maybe I'm quite <u>prone</u> to be an 247anxious person really to have anxiety, 248so first day of school, first day at uni, 249first day at anything I suppose, work.</p> <p>24. 250I remember when I got my first 251assistant psychology post here at the 252XXX team I was like 'Aah' I bet this 253<u>isn't good enough</u>, I bet there are other 254better assistant psychology jobs out 255there.</p> <p>25. 256This interview is really making me 257think back of how <u>ridiculously anxious I</u> 258<u>am the whole time</u>. And to great <u>no</u> 259<u>effect</u>, it's not like it does <u>anything</u> 260<u>particularly useful</u> once I do get 261anxious. Yeah so I think it is a 262repeating <u>pattern in my life</u>.</p> <p>26. 263Yeah. It's a <u>worry</u> that it's not good 264enough or that <u>I'm not good enough</u> 265for it. It's like yin and yang, the 266opposites are connected they are 267entwined, that might sound a bit 268contradictory.</p> <p>27. 269Because I work over in the X 270XXXXXXXXXX clinic as well. Oh my God the 271<u>anxiety</u> on my first day there I could</p>	<p>fears and drives inform her desire to become a good psychologist defined as respected and producing useful work.</p> <p>23. Anxiety is understood as a personal characteristic which is experienced in her interaction with the world and events in her life.</p> <p>24. The quality of her clinical experiences were diminished in comparison to an imagined ideal.</p> <p>25. Her experience of anxiety is of a persistent nature with a useless quality to it and constitutes a familiar repetitive pattern in her life.</p> <p>26. Worry occurs in relation to concerns she has around the adequacy of her attributes and the adequacy of the course in being able to fulfil her goals.</p> <p>27. The start of her placement elicited high levels of anxiety and a pressure to do a good job which gave rise to fears and doubts related to</p>	<p>professional success and respect with the alternative being fear of the ordinary.</p> <p>23. An anxious mode of experiencing is considered a defining possession of the self which is stimulated readily in the inter-relationship with self and the world.</p> <p>24. N/A</p> <p>25. Anxiety constitutes a persistent theme in her life with it dismissed as an absurdity.</p> <p>26. Fears relating to the self converge with perceived characteristics of the course leading to the experience of worry.</p> <p>27. Personal factors like insecurity about own value and fears around her competence converge with and</p>
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<p>272almost, I almost got to be <u>sick</u> getting 273there oh my I just want to <u>do a really</u> 274<u>good job</u>, am I <u>good enough</u>, I don't 275<u>know anything</u> about the subject or 276what am I doing taking this placement, 277what happens if I don't like the 278placement, what happens if I'm not 279good enough, what happens if they 280think I'm <u>stupid</u>, what happens if they 281think I'm really inexperienced I mean 282the conversation going on in my head, 283the <u>dialogue was exhausting</u>.</p> <p>28. 284Yeah, definitely, because that would 285be the <u>fear</u> that I'm <u>not good enough</u> 286so everyone in the placement and the 287university would <u>know</u> that I'm not 288good enough, they're going to know 289that I'm <u>not clever enough</u> for the 290course. So I <u>can't win</u>.</p> <p>29. 291Mm, but the good thing is that I'm 292beginning to <u>learn</u> that about myself so 293it's probably isn't confusing or tiring as 294it might sound I'm <u>beginning</u> to get a 295bit more <u>understanding</u> of it so when I 296see it happening I'm like 'oh here we 297go again, my old friend, anxiety'. And I 298can just <u>look at it</u> rather than being 299completely <u>caught up in it</u>.</p> <p>30. 300Personal therapy maybe even from my 301<u>own reading</u> of mindfulness and other 302interventions I've <u>been using</u> with 303clients. Just to <u>stop getting so caught</u> 304<u>up</u> in what you're experiencing and 305just try to <u>notice it</u>.</p>	<p>her competence and the standard of the placement; the convergence of these experiences were exhausting.</p> <p>28. She experiences insecurity around her capabilities which creates a fear that she will be perceived by others in the training context as lacking in skills and intelligence which is accompanied by a sense of defeat.</p> <p>29. She learns about herself through developing an understanding of how she experiences anxiety; this learning involves a clearer apprehension of it rather than being consumed by it.</p> <p>30. Her experience of learning (about anxiety) has occurred through reading and applying therapeutic interventions to herself with the effect of lessening the consuming sensing of it in favour of a more attentive and aware approach.</p>	<p>are given expression in a confrontation with the unknown nature of the professional setting she will encounter giving rise to intense anxiety experienced as nausea.</p> <p>28. She fears becoming aware and cognisant of her incompetence with this diminishing experience occurring through interaction with others.</p> <p>29. Learning about self is occurring through comprehension of her anxious experiencing which consists of awareness of it on a sensory, cognitive and affective level in an immediate way but without being consumed and overwhelmed by it.</p> <p>30. The means of learning about her experiencing happens through reading about theory and implementing interventions with this learning manifesting in an observational attitude to her experience which lessens the intensity and overpowering sense of</p>
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<p>31. 306And you've got to have that as a 307trainee definitely as a psychologist if 308you're not <u>aware</u> of your <u>weak points</u> 309and so on then you know, it's almost 310as if you shouldn't be <u>unleashed</u> on to 311the clients if you don't even know what 312your own trigger points are. Because it 313seems very irresponsible doesn't it?</p> <p>32. 314I'm very <u>prone</u> to reacting in an 315anxious style slightly sort of cat on a 316hot tin roof where I really <u>need to</u> 317<u>understand</u> that that's my own 318signature, that's my <u>own way of</u> 319<u>reacting</u> to situations</p> <p>33. 320and a client might say 'x,y,z' and I've 321got to know that <u>shaped the way I</u> 322<u>looked at things</u>, so if I have really 323positive beliefs about anxiety I could 324easily <u>transfer</u> that onto clients and be 325like 'yeah no I think you should spend 326time worrying about that' and being 327ridiculously inappropriate sort of letting 328people go on with that with that so it's 329good for me to <u>recognise</u> my own 330anxiety.</p> <p>34. 331Good question, why else? Why is it 332getting to contact, to have <u>more</u> 333<u>awareness</u> of your own attitudes and 334perceptions of things because I think I 335take it for <u>granted</u> so many <u>attitudes</u> 336<u>and ideas</u> I have about life or about 337people or things and I hardly even 338<u>know</u> what is my <u>own idiosyncratic</u> 339<u>way of looking at it</u> and having</p>	<p>31. She considers awareness of her weaknesses as a necessity and an ethical responsibility to avoid harming clients.</p> <p>32. There is a need to understand that she has an underlying tendency to respond in an anxious manner to situations and to own this as unique to her.</p> <p>33. Increasing her awareness into the stance she has towards anxiety and how her perception is influenced as a result is important for clinical work.</p> <p>34. Personal therapy has facilitated the ability to consider her previously taken for granted assumptions in a critical manner which she has experienced as greater clarity in her perception of the world.</p>	<p>it.</p> <p>31. Ethical responsibility implies importance of developing awareness of perceived weaknesses as these are thought to be harmful to the client.</p> <p>32. A need to comprehend her characteristic manner of anxious responding to situations and owning this style of response.</p> <p>33. Knowledge of how her perception has been influenced and familiarity with her anxiety evaluated as clinically important as this awareness prevents unhelpful beliefs influencing the work.</p> <p>34. Owning her attitudes and perceptions as idiosyncratic to her and moving away from the self-evident appearance of life, existence and others with the emergence of clearer perception of things.</p>
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<p>340personal therapy has helped take the 341goggles or the sunglasses off and be 342able to see things a bit more clearly.</p> <p>35. 342I <u>think</u> that definitely along with my 343peer group because we are a fairly I 344don't know if we are a mixed bunch of 345people actually we're probably from 346the outside look like a bunch of white 347middle-class females, poor man, 348there's 1 guy on our course but you 349know another guy has just started, so 350very uneven but within that group even 351though we do look slightly homogenous I 352think there is quite a good mix of 353experiences, attitudes and so on. So I 354think that has been a real <u>learning</u> 355<u>curve</u> as well as having to <u>understand</u> 356you know what's my <u>point of</u> 357<u>reference</u>, what's my background been 358like. And that's something we did in 359the process day actually as well.</p> <p>36. 359What really <u>struck</u> me was we were 360asked to do an exercise where we pair 361up with somebody and talk about our 362sort of <u>family values</u> and how, just 363draw a picture about us and our values 364and then share it with someone else 365and I just thought my values would just 366be where everyone's else and they 367were so different to what the girl had 368and I think she actually got really upset 369because I think I was painting a picture 370of I've got a really solid family life, I've 371got a really supportive mother and 372father and I just kind of <u>blindly</u> 373<u>assumed</u> that she would have the 374same and when I painted that picture</p>	<p>35. A cognitive process of learning and comprehension has occurred through consideration of the role socio-cultural factors have in influencing her perception of the world.</p> <p>36. Her taken for granted assumptions were brought to light within a dyadic interaction where she experienced alternative values challenging her own assumptions; through this she experienced learning.</p>	<p>35. Her learning about self has been co-constituted by her fellow trainees through consideration of her socio- cultural position.</p> <p>36. The facets of her learning co- constituted through her interaction with others, with uncritically accepted assumptions and values were exposed through experiences of another student's life-world.</p>
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<p>375she just got really upset. Not out of 376any malice it was just oh God I wish I 377had that. So I think it's yeah <u>learning</u> 378that you get from your <u>course mates</u> 379as well.</p> <p>37. 380I think that's probably come out of the 381gender identity clinic, there is a lot 382about <u>checking in</u> with your <u>attitudes</u> 383and society's attitudes and are you 384really <u>aware</u> of what pain might feel 385like so trans-gender, homo-phobia and 386really trying to get in touch with I think I 387see a lot of people's reactions how 388trans phobic or homophobic other 389people can be and that's been quite a 390<u>wake-up call</u> for me.</p> <p>38. 391<u>Who I am</u> and why do you <u>use</u> 392<u>expressions</u> like <u>wanting to help</u> 393<u>people</u> and you know we're sort of 394doing some schema training where we 395sort of thinking there's that actually, 396because there's a self-sacrificing 397schema or I don't know what else it's 398kind of <u>looking</u> a bit more in depth into 399the <u>kind of personality</u> that you have 400and <u>why</u> that makes you <u>good for this</u> 401<u>profession</u> and most of them are good 402reasons but if some of them are out of 403a lack of confidence to do with 404something else or a self-sacrificing 405schema or whatever it might be <u>makes</u> 406<u>you understand yourself a bit better</u>.</p> <p>39. 407Initially quite <u>scary</u> I think when you're 408beginning to <u>understand yourself</u> a bit 409more or trying <u>to learn</u> more about 410yourself you're like '<u>oh my God</u>'</p>	<p>37. Through clinical work awareness of the affect her attitudes might have on others has developed.</p> <p>38. In-depth exploration of her personality involving her identity and motivations to want to help people and how these personal factors interface with and are advantageous to the counselling psychology discipline; through this exploratory process improved understanding of self has occurred.</p> <p>39. Initially the process of gaining understanding of her self was felt to be frightening with this personal learning experienced as an epiphany.</p>	<p>37. Working with diverse client groups stimulated a clarification of her own attitudes towards difference and how this might be perceived by the client.</p> <p>38. Through in-depth exploration of her motivations for pursuing this profession with reference to the organisation of her personality self- knowledge has occurred.</p> <p>39. Self-understanding and a desire to discover more about self as forms of learning arouse feelings of fear with insight associated with</p>
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<p>40. 411so first year of therapy I <u>feel</u> like I was 412on a roller-coaster, I felt like I <u>didn't</u> 413<u>understand myself</u>, <u>strong emotions</u> 414coming out, feeling <u>anxious</u>, feeling 415<u>sad</u>, <u>feeling all over the place</u> and now 416maybe I've <u>come through</u> that time of 417<u>not understanding myself</u> to beginning 418to <u>understand it more</u> and to <u>feeling</u> 419<u>more settled</u>. So the <u>emotions seem to</u> 420<u>make sense</u> now I know <u>where they</u> 421<u>are coming from</u>.</p> <p>41. 422<u>Retrospectively</u> I would say that was 423<u>great that was really good for me</u>. It's 424like going for a marathon you're doing 425it at the time and you're like <u>I don't</u> 426<u>want to do</u> this but <u>afterwards</u> you're 427like no that was <u>really good for me</u> to 428do that.</p> <p>42. 429I <u>feel</u> like <u>I've grown up</u> so much, I <u>look</u> 430<u>back</u> on last year and I think I was 431quite <u>immature</u> in terms of maybe what 432I <u>expected out of the training</u> maybe 433it's not immature, maybe <u>naive</u> to why 434I wanted to go into it, I thought I as to 435why I wanted to do this training and I 436<u>don't think I realised why I wanted to</u> 437<u>do it</u>. And luckily enough I've 438understood why I want to do it and 439that's ok, that <u>alright</u>.</p>	<p>40. The developmental process involved the expression of heightened affect of anxiety and sadness the intensity of which left her feeling out of her control; an initial inability to recognise her self in this state was replaced with a greater self understanding associated with a feeling of calmness. Through this process her emotions and their appearance have been explicated.</p> <p>41. In the midst of the process she was reluctant to continue but emerging from this time and through reflection she is able to identify the benefits of having those experiences.</p> <p>42. Growth has occurred for her through a shift from a naïve position with unrealistic expectations of the training to a more mature position characterised by greater understanding of motivation to pursue counselling psychology.</p>	<p>comprehension of self.</p> <p>40. <i>Development experienced as movement from limited self-knowledge and through expression and experience of intense affect of sadness and anxiety and the sense of internal incoherence which this gave rise to, to an emergence from this state through increased self-knowledge to a sense of serenity with greater cognisance of the emotions experienced and their manner of appearance.</i> STRUCTURE</p> <p>41. Immediate engagement with painful experience obscures the beneficial aspects of it however emerging from this and reflection on the experience in the past recognition of value of experience to self occurs.</p> <p>42. Forward growth experienced as a movement from a state of naïveté to greater clarity and comprehension through clarification of motivation for pursuing profession.</p> <p>43. Emergence from a child-like state</p>
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<p>43. 440And I think the <u>way I view is myself</u> is 441honestly that I am a <u>responsible adult</u> 442and I've got a child in me, and I've 443struggled a bit with my family and it's 444<u>come through the other side</u> and I'm 445<u>much better for it</u> now. It's been like a 446<u>work out</u>.</p> <p>44. 447And definitely like I was saying earlier 448on I kind of think Oh my goodness if I 449hadn't gone on to counselling 450psychology would I not <u>know this</u> 451<u>about myself</u>. If I was on clinical and 452they didn't ask for this <u>introspection</u> to 453the <u>same degree</u> would I just be 454merrily trotting around being slightly 455<u>ignorant</u> of my own <u>soft spots</u> or 456<u>prejudices</u> or whatever it might be.</p> <p>45. 457So I really funny way I'm so glad that 458I'm on this training because <u>I've</u> 459<u>opened my eyes to myself</u> and much 460more than I would've done otherwise.</p> <p>46. 461Yeah, I think because I feel real sense 462<u>relief</u>. I feel like a hump, I've come 463over the camel's hump and I'm like 464'aah ok good <u>I get it now</u>'. Relief. 465Because all that <u>turmoil</u> was for 466<u>something that anxiety has dissipated</u> 467a little bit so I feel a bit of <u>relief</u> and 468that's come with <u>more understanding</u> 469of <u>myself</u> so there is a <u>sense of</u> 470<u>achievement</u>.</p> <p>47. 451Definitely I think maybe before you go 452on training you are quite <u>cocooned</u> in 453what you are <u>able to do</u> in your job so 454as an assistant I was it was very kind</p>	<p>43. Having emerged from a difficult process she views herself as improved as a result of having experienced it.</p> <p>44. Extensive introspection is required in developing self knowledge without which ignorance around prejudices and blind spots would remain.</p> <p>45. Happiness that her self-awareness has increased as a result of this training.</p> <p>46. The feeling of relief accompanies her new awareness of the function of the turmoil experienced with an associated reduction in anxiety; the emerging self understanding is experienced as an achievement.</p> <p>47. N/A</p>	<p>through to a responsible adult state where through the participation in a psychological process an enhanced self is experienced.</p> <p>44. Extensive inward looking facilitates awareness of previously unacknowledged areas and prejudices.</p> <p>45. Clearer perception of self through training.</p> <p>46. Self-understanding experienced as revelatory which provides meaning to the turmoil she experienced with a dissipation of some anxiety experienced; a sense of achievement and relief at overcoming this turmoil.</p> <p>47. N/A.</p>
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<p>455of small little amounts that you're 456allowed to taste of things you're 457allowed to do and doing mostly audits</p> <p>48. 458and doing this and actually when you 459are <u>thrown in</u> at the deep end <u>starting</u> 460<u>to do</u> client work is very different and 461there's a real sense of actually this is 462requires me to <u>learn fast, grow up, get</u> 463<u>on</u> with it so definitely kind of being 464<u>exposed</u> more to <u>newer situations</u>.</p> <p>49. 465Well I think the difficulty with post- 466graduate teaching is that they aren't 467around to hold your hand the whole 468time I mean they have a school of 469undergraduates so it is definitely a 469case of you <u>getting on with it</u> and it's 450up to you to ask for help and to start 451off with I didn't <u>really want to ask for</u> 452<u>help</u> because it would involve me 453going to the tutors and going you know 454what I think this course is second best 455so I definitely <u>sat on it for a long time</u> 456but the course is like a <u>big boil</u> at some 457point it's got to burst and it burst on 458process day and I was.</p> <p>50. 459But once it had and I went to go see a 460tutor about it she was amazingly 461<u>supportive</u> I always thought she was a 462bit of a dragon actually when I first 463came I probably shouldn't say that and 464actually when I went to have a chat 465with we were having a kind of term 466review about how she thought I was 467doing and she gave me some valuable 468feedback but of course as soon as 469someone starts being nice to you my</p>	<p>48. Her first experience working with clients felt sudden which she experienced as requiring her to learn and apply material quickly which felt like she had to metaphorically grow up quickly.</p> <p>49. Reluctance to ask for help from tutors because post-graduate status implies independence but the course experienced as creating a pressure in her towards expression of experiences.</p> <p>50. Accessing support from a tutor invigorated her and strengthened her resolve to continue with the course.</p>	<p>48. Client work experienced as a challenge requiring independence through application of learning.</p> <p>49. The position of post-graduate student experienced as requiring greater independence with autonomy action; pressure felt towards expression of conflicts/ difficulties.</p> <p>50. Support from tutors strengthened resolve to continue.</p>
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<p>450chin started wobbling and I started 451<u>crying</u> and she was wonderful and she 452gave me some really good practical 453advice and I really felt so <u>invigorated</u> 454from it right I <u>can do this come on</u>.</p> <p>51. 455Definitely and I think half that step is to 456<u>stop bottling things up</u> and just to say 457you know what this is <u>how I feel</u> about 458this and the funny thing is that once 459you do that you realise that you <u>aren't</u> 460<u>alone</u> and I managed to <u>share my</u> 461<u>anxiety</u> with one other person actually 462the 1 guy on the course and he said 463exactly the same you know what I 464applied for clinical again this year no 465one even called just to see if I could 466get on</p> <p>52. 467and he didn't and just to <u>realise</u> you 468know there are a lot of things that you 469don't get in life and there are a <u>lot of</u> 470<u>other people who have that too</u> and 471that's ok but it's what you do with that 472and <u>how you get on with it</u> and <u>how</u> 473<u>you move forward</u>.</p> <p>53. 474By <u>still getting me</u> on my path to 475becoming a professional to being a 476chartered psychologist because that's 477what I because after I didn't get onto 478clinical I thought what do I want out of 479life well I want to be a chartered 480psychologist, that's what I want to do 481so ok stop crying about not being able 482to get onto your first training course 483and go for second best which is just as 484good so that was a real sense of just. 485Sorry I forgot what your question is. Of</p>	<p>51. Through expressing her emotions which she had suppressed before she shared the burden of her anxiety which felt supportive and reduced her sense of loneliness.</p> <p>52. A sense of contentment occurred through recognising disappointment as a shared human experience; through managing it and continuing to pursue her goals was presented as a learning experience for her.</p> <p>53. N/A</p>	<p>51. Movement from suppression of feelings to acceptance of emotional expressivity with sharing of anxiety reducing sense of loneliness she felt.</p> <p>52. Quality of forward movement towards achieving goals considered through consideration of emotional state.</p> <p>53. N/A</p>
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<p>486how the course has helped you do it 487because it's got me on my path 488anyway. So that's when I thought I've 489got to get practical. I still get the 490doctorate, I still am like a trained 491psychologist, just a slightly different 492field. But the 2 do seem to be so 493closely linked that there isn't such a 494huge distinction I don't think.</p> <p>54. 495I mean maybe a difference in the 496underpinning of maybe the philosophy 497is different but I think I was thinking to 498myself well what client group do I want 499to work with and does counselling 500psychology not allow me to do that, 501yeah I can do that and if anything it 502adds value because I'm coming from a 503slightly different angle. Why not. So I 504got there in the end, well I've not 505gotten to the end of course yet but 506getting there.</p> <p>55. 507It's been good I've <u>enjoyed</u> the 508<u>experiential</u> side of things and I've had 509lots of that kind of stuff in classes 510that's been <u>really powerful</u> and I've 511really <u>valued</u> that a lot.</p> <p>56. 512Because you just feel it just <u>works so</u> 513<u>much better</u> than just reading a 514handout or reading a slide, <u>you learn</u> 515<u>about experience you felt</u> and how you 516tried out this technique, we just very 517much <u>tried out techniques in class</u> and 518<u>taking risks</u> and so and being asked if 519someone would be prepared to go up 520in front of the class with someone else 521and <u>practice</u> doing person centred</p>	<p>54. N/A</p> <p>55. Experiential learning for her has been a powerful experience which she valued.</p> <p>56. Experiential learning was more effective than traditional learning as it involved her experience which she sensed; practising therapeutic skills in class where risks could be taken was a form of this and was experienced as memorable.</p>	<p>54. N/A</p> <p>55. Learning through experience valuable and powerful.</p> <p>56. Experiencing the feeling related to the practical implementation of a technique facilitates learning of a therapeutic skill.</p>
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<p>522counselling for about 10 minutes <u>in</u> 523<u>front of the class</u> and I thought go for it 524and so I volunteered. It <u>felt very</u> 525<u>positive</u> and those experiences stick in 526my head more than reading a book.</p> <p>57. 527But then I suppose the shortcoming of 528this counselling course is that they try 529and <u>get you to understand a whole</u> 530<u>load of different approaches and</u> 531<u>different models very very quickly</u> so 532we did 1 semester of person centred, 5331 semester of CBT, 1 semester of 534psychodynamic. And then I think 'oh 535my God' that's not much teaching, how 536much <u>depth can we go into</u>.</p> <p>58. 536Because it probably <u>feeds</u> in to my 537thinking 'Oh my God, if I was at a 538different university we would've done 539so much more teaching we would've 540had so much more well <u>this isn't</u> 541<u>enough</u>' and then I <u>worry</u> about I 542haven't been given enough information 543but then I do recognise as well this is 544post-graduate it's up to you once 545you've been given the basic outline to 546go an fill it in and read up all the rest.</p> <p>59. 547I think to contradict myself that it's 548been really really <u>helpful</u> to have all 3, 549so having spent all of first year one 550approach I mean a year on each 551approach I would probably be quite 552frustrated thinking I kind of want a bit 553of a <u>how to guide</u> quite quickly on the 554work I'm doing with my clients. For 555example using CBT with my client 556group here fantastic I know what I'm</p>	<p>57. Through experiencing a requirement to quickly learn about several different therapeutic approaches and models with little teaching she experienced apprehension that not enough material had been covered in detail.</p> <p>58. She perceives a need to balance the expectations held about post-graduate students and independent study with her own worries and insecurities relating to her goals of being competent through comparison to other universities.</p> <p>59. Early exposure to 3 models she has experienced as useful in so far as it has been pragmatic to be able to have a brief outline of each model to apply quickly which has assisted her in her placements.</p>	<p>57. Concern stimulated by perception of inadequacy of her therapeutic knowledge base of different therapeutic approaches.</p> <p>58. Perceived limitations of the course converge with self related experiences and the nature of her anxiety is constituted by this perception eliciting a rational counter-response to experienced situation.</p> <p>59. She felt a need to have guidelines and clear instructions to work therapeutically with clients in response to external felt pressures but also to avoid her own feelings of frustration.</p>
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<p>557doing I have to go <u>get cracking</u> with 558that however over at XXX actually 559CBT isn't what's needed there might 560be person centred counselling or it 561might be needing to have some 562concept of psychodynamic work and 563kind of being quite integrative so 564actually having a <u>taster</u> of all 3 to <u>get</u> 565<u>you going quite quickly</u> is what I really 566needed in this placement and had it 567been slow I might have found that 568<u>frustrating</u>.</p> <p>60. 569So I have <u>valued</u> it but I suppose I've 570been <u>worried</u> a bit about what happens 571if there is a whole area there that <u>I'm</u> 572<u>missing out</u>.</p> <p>61. 573I'm just trying to think, I think moving 574from an assistant psychologist to a 575trainee was there was something very 576useful about having the <u>trainee status</u> 577that gave me a <u>big boost of confidence</u> 578that university or a group of 579professionals thought that I was 580<u>competent</u> enough to start as a trainee 581and I did feel <u>my confidence increased</u> 582having had quite a few knock-backs 583from applying for clinical before and 584feeling that there was something that I 585wasn't doing right that actually maybe 586this was an indication for that I was 587doing something that could be seen as 588of a competent person in training. So I 589think that is the main difference I felt.</p> <p>62. 591Yes so having applied to get into 592clinical psychology training and having 593not been well having been interviewed</p>	<p>60. She experiences anxiety at prospect of missing significant areas in the theory.</p> <p>61. The title of trainee provided her with a sense of status; an increase in her self confidence occurred through the belief that respected others considered her competent which influenced the view she had of herself as competent.</p> <p>62. Previous applications which were unsuccessful created doubts about her competence and ability to be a psychologist with acceptance on</p>	<p>60. Worry is experienced about effects of insufficient knowledge.</p> <p>61. Validation of her competency by others and the status she perceives as attached to a title of 'trainee' was felt as increasing the value she placed on herself.</p> <p>62. Acceptance on to the course with external validation of her competence and approval of her self as a psychologist giving rise to</p>
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<p>594but not having got a place successfully 595and being kind of <u>felt</u> that there was 596something that <u>I wasn't right I wasn't</u> 597<u>good enough</u> to be a psychologist or I 598was doing something wrong but I 599never got a sense of what that was I 600could never get any direct feedback if 601there was something in particular that I 602was doing wrong so getting onto the 603training at XXX was fantastic because 604it just gave me an indication that I 605hadn't been barking up the wrong tree 606and that it really was something that I 607<u>was competent</u> at. So yeah it was like 608<u>winning a stamp of approval</u> I 609suppose.</p>	<p>to the course experienced as an affirmation of her competence.</p>	<p>very positive feelings.</p>
<p>63. 601That's a good point because I suppose 602I probably had that initial hump of 603<u>feeling very excited and validated and</u> 604<u>reassured</u> and then starting out on the 605first year at uni I think the university 606did a lot to try to <u>contain and support</u> 607us but there's still so much that they 608can't do and then I think I probably just 609<u>feeling very very anxious</u>.</p>	<p>63. At the start of the training process she felt excitement and a sense of being validated which was reassuring for her; despite attempts at containment by the tutors she experienced heightened anxiety.</p>	<p>63. External sources experienced as initially able to assuage her fears with reassurance experienced temporarily however this feeling inadequate and giving way to intense experience of anxiety.</p>
<p>64. 610But mainly with the clinical work so 611standing there <u>thinking I don't really</u> 612<u>know how to do a first session, what is</u> 613<u>expected</u> of me when I go into a room 614and meet someone for the first time, 615how do I know if I'm <u>doing a good</u> 616<u>assessment</u>?</p>	<p>64. Unfamiliarity with clinical work through no previous experience of the minutiae of a therapeutic session raised questions and concerns for her.</p>	<p>64. The unknown nature of therapeutic work with felt uncertainty arising from her performance intersecting with own fear about being competent.</p>
<p>65. 617Oh I can't think there's just <u>millions of</u> 618<u>questions running through my head</u> so 619<u>feeling quite anxious</u> about wanting to 620<u>do everything really well</u> and how to do</p>	<p>65. Her desire to be competent and to do a good job combined with considerable uncertainty that could not be stilled elicited high levels of anxiety.</p>	<p>65. Uncertainty of the therapeutic encounter and inability to still this unknowing co-occurring with personal fears around competency</p>

<p>621things for <u>the best</u> and having lots of 622<u>questions that couldn't be answered</u> 623but probably that no one could have 624answered them because there was 625just millions of them.</p> <p>66. 626I just sort of <u>remember</u> having tutorials 627and that being the time where 628everyone would get together for an 629hour in my tut group and <u>being a very</u> 630<u>anxious</u> and having <u>lots of questions</u> 631and we had a really great tutor who 632was very very grounded very steady, 633very knowledgeable, and we were all 634very good problem solvers so that was 635a great place to come together and 636<u>feel very well supported</u></p> <p>67. 636I feel otherwise there was almost a 637notion within our year group that 638hysteria that whips up within the group 639and 1 of the students actually said that 640out loud to all of us in quite a funny 641way he's a really fun guy and we were 642in a lecture one time and someone 643said something that sort of like was 644heard here and there and we were like 645what was that and he said 'oh my 646goodness look at us how we've just 647become hysterical over the idea that 648you know there's this information that' 649so I think as a year group or maybe it's 650just because we were <u>first year's</u> there 651was a <u>tendency to get quite anxious</u> 652<u>about things.</u></p> <p>68. 653I think he was being funny but I do 654think that there was an absolute 655element of truth in that and I don't</p>	<p>66. She recalls a memory of experiencing a state of heightened anxiety in the context of uncertainty; a tutorial was experienced as a supportive space through the provision of knowledge and attempts at problem-solving.</p> <p>67. The experience of anxiety in the first year had a contagion-like effect which she understood as mass hysteria amongst the first year group; the first year position creates an underlying vulnerability towards experiencing in an anxious manner.</p> <p>68. Attempts to understand this experience through gender differences or due to the position of being a first year.</p>	<p>eliciting high anxiety feelings.</p> <p>66. Anxiety co-occurring in context of her uncertainty.</p> <p>67. She posits the first year position as creating a vulnerability to anxious experiencing.</p> <p>68. Experience of anxiety elicits cognitive meaning making attempts with certain positions identified as giving rise to the experience.</p>
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<p>656know if it had anything to do with the 657fact that we were all girls than boys or 658maybe it's not a gender difference or 659maybe it's just we were first years.</p> <p>69. 660And I'm not quite sure why that was 661but maybe as a group of people but 662I'm sure that you'll find most post- 663graduate training courses if not all 664there's probably a <u>high level of</u> 665<u>perfectionism and ambition</u>,</p> <p>70. 666so I think people have a <u>tendency to</u> 667<u>become very anxious</u> when they feel 668that something is <u>out of their control</u>, 669maybe that's it there are so many 670variables on the training course that 671you <u>can't be in control</u> of everything so 672there are some elements of when 673you're <u>starting your placements</u> that 674just can't control everything for 675example you might be waiting on a 676piece of paperwork to be signed off by 677your tutor and there is only so much 678you can do to push someone along so 679I think everyone <u>felt that anxiety</u> to 680start off with. That there were so <u>many</u> 681<u>things to coordinate</u> and you <u>can't</u> 682<u>control it all</u>.</p> <p>71. 673Yeah I think so I just I mean not for 674everyone but I think for a huge amount 675of people to be able to you know to 676want to take on post-graduate study to 677that level you really got to have a <u>drive</u> 678<u>to want to sit up to funny hours of the</u> 679<u>morning reading books</u> and <u>writing</u> 680<u>long pieces of course work</u>, you've got 681to have <u>high standards</u>.</p>	<p>69. Attempts to identify personality factors such as high levels of ambition and perfectionistic traits along with level of study as implicated in the process.</p> <p>70. Anxiety is understood as occurring in the context of an inability to control and coordinate the many aspects involved in the training process such as placements and feeling a lack of control within this process as a result.</p> <p>71. She holds a belief that to study at a post-graduate level drive is required to work hard and to have high standards.</p>	<p>69. Attempts at comprehending anxiety through interaction of personal qualities and study context.</p> <p>70. She attempts to understand how the uncontrollable aspects of the course elicit anxiety.</p> <p>71. N/A</p>
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<p>72. 672I think that also comes into clinical 673work as well that you have a <u>duty a</u> 674<u>care to look after people</u> and that 675comes with <u>great responsibility</u> and I 676think people who take on that 677responsibility do have to have a <u>level</u> 678<u>of perfectionism</u>, I wouldn't say 679complete perfectionism but <u>high</u> 680<u>standards</u> at least so that you do a 681good job. I think it's about trying to 682balance that because I think yeah 683perfectionism can get in the way of 684<u>doing the work</u> actually.</p> <p>73. 685Sometimes it's about <u>learning to just</u> 686<u>let go</u> a little bit and but it's something 687I've found personal therapy really 688useful just the idea of <u>learning from my</u> 689<u>therapy</u> that there are some things that 690you just can't change so things you 691need to <u>learn to sit with</u> so can you 692<u>learn to sit with your anxiety</u> so yeah. 693Otherwise we trample on things and 694try to make everything perfect and it 695just happen and that's <u>not human</u> 696<u>nature</u> and we are dealing with human 697nature and the frailty of human nature 698and its imperfections.</p> <p>74. 699Definitely I think it's so important it 700really is it does worry me to think that 701some people could be training and not 702take on personal therapy I mean 703different courses have different 704requirements</p> <p>75. 705but I was quite <u>sceptical</u> going into 706personal therapy thinking 'wow, I'm all</p>	<p>72. In clarifying her ethics she identifies a great sense of responsibility towards clients, maintaining high standards through doing a good job; she realises her perfectionism can hinder therapeutic work.</p> <p>73. Her learning in personal therapy results in a greater understanding of the fallacy of total control with greater acceptance of self and human nature as imperfect; through this acceptance she has developed a greater ability to tolerate her own anxiety.</p> <p>74. Importance of personal therapy for training emphasised.</p> <p>75. Prior to embarking in personal therapy she was dubious about it on the grounds that she</p>	<p>72. A general ethical requirement converges with a personal attitude and stance she has towards clinical work in general.</p> <p>73. Learning to tolerate her own anxiety dispels her notions of perfection with a changed view of human nature as fragile posited as a result of this experience.</p> <p>74. N/A</p> <p>75. Aspects of her self experience have been dramatically revealed to her which illuminate the nature of her</p>
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<p>707sorted, it's all fine I <u>don't really need to</u> 708go but it will be quite interesting.' And 709just the <u>personal discoveries</u> that I'm 710making have been a <u>revelation</u> to me 711and especially in relation to my work I 712understand so much more now <u>why I</u> 713<u>react</u> in certain ways when people say 714certain things I think the therapy is 715crucial, absolutely crucial.</p> <p>76. : 716I think it could be just a more self- 717aware person generally but I think 718particularly when it comes to being a 719therapist I think it has been really 720helpful for example for me to <u>look at</u> 721<u>early childhood experiences</u> and how 722those have <u>impacted me</u> and how I 723now kind of act those or how they 724come into the present day life for me 725so particular <u>drives</u> I have for say 726<u>perfectionism</u> or got <u>very high</u> 727<u>standards</u> and where they come from 728and to <u>notice that I have a tendency to</u> 729<u>act</u> in that way is maybe a bit of 730<u>defence mechanism</u> I mean I know 731that can be really useful</p> <p>77. 732for example if you are with a client who 733is demanding a lot from you can you 734just <u>notice your pull</u> to want to try to 735show them that you can try to do 736things perfectly or can you <u>take a step</u> 737<u>back</u> and maybe <u>model</u> imperfection or 738<u>show</u> that you have limits so that is 1 739example of where <u>therapy</u> has been 740really useful.</p> <p>78. 741I think <u>understanding</u> your family 742values that side too cause really</p>	<p>was integrated; the nature of her discoveries in relation to understanding her reactions and behaviours has been experienced as revelatory.</p> <p>76. Self-awareness occurs for her through exploration of how her past early experiences influence her current life and actions; this involves recognition of how her motivational drives have developed and identification of her habitual behaviours. Psychodynamic concepts such as defences are helpful in understanding these facets of her history.</p> <p>77. Observing her habitual response to client's stance and through reflection in action offer an alternative therapeutic response; personal therapy has assisted her developing this skill.</p> <p>78. Exploration of her family life has elicited awareness and understanding of her values and assumptions; knowledge of this has</p>	<p>behaviour occurring in response to others; this awareness extends to assisting in work-related context.</p> <p>76. Exploration of past experiences as shaping current behaviour through her unique manner of responding in present have helped develop her awareness which involves self-knowledge and knowledge of how she is in the present.</p> <p>77. A recognition occurring in the present in the dialogue with another of her behaviour with the developed ability to exercise control over how she behaves with cognisance of a therapeutic goal.</p> <p>78. Exploration of family life provides knowledge of her values and assumptions as specific to her and through this a developed</p>
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<p>743understanding a bit you know you 744could so there <u>looking</u> into your own 745family life that you forget that your 746family life is really different to everyone 747else's and just beginning to 748understand that that many people 749don't have a family life like I do. But 750just that mine is different to everyone 751else's by virtue of the fact that we're a 752unique bunch of people and no one 753else if going to have exactly the same 754family and these assumptions that I 755might make about the world, about 756families, about relationships which are 757very much based on my experiences 758and not anyone else's. Kind of 759especially working with for example 760the early intervention team with clients 761from very different backgrounds to my 762own experiences from different 763countries, from different cultures, 764different religions has been really good 765for me park my assumptions and 766values are and to be mindful of that.</p> <p>79. 767Well I think they match, the 2 are 768linked. I just think it's difficult to <u>grow</u> 769without having a bit of <u>guidance</u> to do 770it so personal growth for me means 771<u>exploration</u>, having a <u>better</u> 772<u>understanding of yourself</u>, as well as 773maybe <u>building up confidence</u> to take 774on <u>new skills</u> or <u>try new things</u> and I 775think that is <u>facilitated</u> through 776personal therapy and I know for 777example when I've wanted to take 778risks and try <u>behaving or being in a</u> 779<u>new way</u> that that's been facilitated 780most effectively through therapy.</p>	<p>alerted her to diversity in clients' backgrounds and through this process she has become mindful and therefore able to bracket these values.</p> <p>79. Personal growth for her requires guidance as it involves exploration through which self understanding is enhanced; personal therapy is experienced as assisting her to develop confidence to acquire and practise new skills, behaviours and existing in a novel way.</p>	<p>therapeutic ability to work with difference and diversity by mentally bracketing these assumptions and values.</p> <p>79. She posits that developing self involves a curiosity to exploring self which confers greater self- knowledge with an increase in self belief to attempt novel things which might have been avoided before.</p>
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<p>80. 781Yeah I think it does for me but I think it 782may be different for other people. I 783think personal therapy generally 784speaking has <u>given me so much more</u> 785<u>awareness</u> that I'm <u>able to look at the</u> 786<u>way I'm reacting to situations</u> or 787whatever it might be with a lot more 788awareness now so that I can now 789<u>choose to maybe act in a different way</u> 790or <u>think about what I'm going to do first</u> 791I think maybe before I was always a bit 792mindless so running around doing 793things which has been good.</p> <p>81. 794It's been really good and I think the 795power of the <u>learning</u> is by <u>doing the</u> 796<u>learning</u> alongside the clinical 797placements. I did a Masters a couple 798of years ago but it didn't require you to 799have any placements it was just a 800research masters I enjoyed it but it 801didn't the information didn't go <u>in on</u> 802<u>board</u> as much as if I had been 803working alongside it.</p> <p>82. 804I feel like learning stuff for uni and then 805being able to take it away and almost 806<u>straight away</u> the next day maybe try 807to <u>implement the stuff you'd learned</u> 808and it has just been the most powerful 809way to learn it. So it has been really 810good being given an outline of 811everything through lectures so then 812you would then be learning about 813different models and being able to 814implement that has been the most 815powerful learning experience for me.</p>	<p>80. Personal therapy has provided her with greater awareness which she views as an ability to consider qualitative aspects of her reactions in situations with greater flexibility of behavioural options available to her; this new stance is experienced as more thoughtful action represents a departure from previous way of functioning.</p> <p>81. Through implementing material practically as it is learnt, learning has been more powerful as information was encoded and stored more effectively in this manner.</p> <p>82. She considered the learning to be especially powerful through the quick succession of presentation of the material in lectures and the practical application and implementation of the material.</p>	<p>80. She thinks of her movement from previous unreflective behaviour to reflection on her feelings and behaviour in given situations which allows for her to choose her behaviour or consider her behaviour before acting.</p> <p>81. Her experience of learning has been powerful through practically applying previously acquired knowledge.</p> <p>82. Nature of her learning characterised by presentation of material and rapidly applying knowledge with this presented as powerful way to become familiar with material.</p> <p>83. Her manner of acquiring knowledge</p>
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<p>83. 816I think definitely 2 places either 817through clients through what they <u>can</u> 818<u>teach you</u> and what you can learn from 819the <u>outcome from therapy</u> but also 820from <u>supervisors</u>.</p> <p>84. 821I know that a lot of my learning has 822come really good supervision and then 823being able to <u>ask them questions</u> and 824sort of getting really teaching sessions 825with them and learning through 826supervision.</p> <p>85. 827Oh loads. Lots and lots and lots. I <u>feel</u> 828like I'm quite a <u>different person</u> to how 829I would've been a couple of years ago. 830I think in a good way I was really 831maybe quite <u>arrogant</u> about becoming 832a psychologist I would totally 833contradict myself cause I was also 834really quite <u>anxious</u> it doesn't make 835any sense but I think what I'm trying to 836get at is the idea that I <u>knew about</u> 837<u>psychology</u> or I knew lots and maybe 838when you start to do the training you 839realise that you just at the beginning 840and you really <u>don't know</u> an awful lot 841but I think it's definitely made me a lot 842more aware of how much there is to 843<u>learn</u> and <u>what a journey</u> this is.</p> <p>86. 844I have an idea that you're making a 845<u>commitment to doing</u> something which 846is more a <u>way of life</u> a kind of thought 847I'll just do this PhD and just get a 848qualification and that will be great and 849actually beginning to <u>see</u> that this is 850something much <u>more deep</u> than that 851it's about an <u>attitude you have to life</u></p>	<p>83. Learning opportunities experienced through client work, supervisors and through outcomes from therapy.</p> <p>84. Through supervision where her uncertainties were clarified she experienced learning.</p> <p>85. She perceives a significant difference and a shift in the person she was compared with who she is now. She identifies an arrogant attitude prior to training based on an evaluation of what she believed she knew and with training a realisation of the extent of her lack of knowledge and the ongoing nature her development will have.</p> <p>86. She transcends the pragmatic boundaries of the training for a view which signifies a life project where changes occur on a fundamental level relating to the nature of her existence; this involves her attitude to life and her way of existing and relating. Her development is more extensive and conceived of in terms of her identity, philosophy and approach which</p>	<p>and skills has occurred through clients, results experienced from therapy and supervision.</p> <p>84. Learning process has occurred through others sharing expertise in supervisory situation.</p> <p>85. She senses her development through how different she feels now with reference to how she was in the past; experiencing a departure from viewing knowledge as an end-state to one which is a process unfolding over time.</p> <p>86. An emerging clarity of comprehension where she transcends the pragmatics of gaining a qualification to thinking of becoming a psychologist as involving a life project which involves changes occurring on a fundamental level relating to her</p>
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<p>852it's a <u>way you choose to relate to</u> 853<u>people</u>, it's a lifelong kind of thing if 854you want it to be I suppose people can 855just go and do the training and quit but 856I don't want to do that its more about 857<u>developing your own identity</u>, your <u>own</u> 858<u>philosophy</u>, your own approach. Yeah 859that's it.</p> <p>87. 860I think it's something that's <u>emerged</u> 861relatively recently than maybe I think 862that's probably before training I 863probably wasn't aware so much of 864more person centred approach I 865certainly wasn't aware of the more 866existential side of things and having to 867start to learn a bit more about those 868<u>different approaches</u> and seeing how 869that really actually <u>fits in with my</u> 870<u>values</u>, I <u>didn't even know</u> those were 871my values so being a congruent 872person you know having putting value 873and meaning onto your life instead of 874coming in and being a CBT therapist 875to me working with clients and the 876meaning again and the 2 being quite 877separate realising well actually it's 878there is <u>more underlying things</u> to it so, 879I don't know if I'm making much sense.</p> <p>88. 880There's something about an <u>attitude</u> 881<u>that you have to life</u> and the way you 882work with people shouldn't just be 883something that you switch on and off 884that's kind of <u>how you are</u>. I think this 885job requires you to be, it takes a lot 886more out of you it's not like just coming 887into the office and just doing 888something and going away again it's</p>	<p>individuates.</p> <p>87. These insights have emerged through training where she has become knowledgeable of theories and existential philosophies and through identifying how these positions converge with her values she has understood these as foundational for her.</p> <p>88. She considers that working with people requires an attitude to life which extends to how she exists; this stance involves her more completely and requires a thoughtful and reflective approach which departs from what she considered before.</p>	<p>attitude towards her existence and manner of relating to others. Her development is conceived of as more extensive involving her identity, personal philosophy and approach with it taking place over time through her life.</p> <p>87. A personal meaning system is developed through awareness of how her values are represented in and through foundational philosophical notions.</p> <p>88. A departure from her previous thinking where her becoming a psychologist is a pervasive and all encompassing manner of relating to self, the world and others; it affects her Being and being through this kind of thought and reflection.</p>
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<p>889something that <u>takes over</u> a lot more 890of your life it requires you to <u>think</u> 891about things a lot and <u>to reflect</u>, which 892I hadn't really thought about before.</p> <p>89. 893I think this role does require you to 894<u>bring yourself</u> much more than other 895roles a kind of think about other 896professions you recognise you 897wouldn't really have to bring yourself 898that much if you didn't want to but so I 899think if you're doing whatever but even 900maybe in some degrees some 901psychiatrists can be quite bish bash 902bosh in and out sort of think</p> <p>90. 903but I think with the counsellors the 904quality in particular really requires you 905to <u>be aware of</u> and <u>bring yourself</u> to 906the counselling room so maybe that's 907your <u>past experiences</u>, your <u>human</u> 908<u>frailty</u>, your <u>shortcomings</u>, the areas 909that you've made in life, your 910<u>personality</u> and how you can use that 911as a <u>tool</u> all these different things and 912each thing you bring needs to be 913brought <u>carefully</u> and <u>thoughtfully</u> but 914the fact that you can incorporate those 915things into the therapy with a client it 916does require you to bring so much of 917your personality.</p> <p>91. 918What's changed, I think the arrogance 919has <u>changed</u> mainly because I think I 920hadn't really <u>worked with clients</u> before 921so I had this idea that I would go into 922the room and I would know lots and it 923would be really straightforward and 924easy and then maybe when you start</p>	<p>89. The role involves her being more present than other roles.</p> <p>90. She considers the use of self as a therapeutic tool which requires an awareness of self and involves bringing her experiencing to the therapeutic encounter in a thoughtful manner.</p> <p>91. Change in arrogance based on increasing knowledge and experience of working with clients; change in belief that her knowledge would bring changes to bear to realisation of clients skills and attributes as sources of learning.</p>	<p>89. The work involves her more completely and she feels it requires her to be present in her current experiencing and awareness.</p> <p>90. She considers the quality of her presence as a counselling psychologist as involving vigilant contact with self including affective, cognitive and sensory contact with past experiences and shortcomings which are used as therapeutic tools.</p> <p>91. Change of self and other attitude through experience and knowledge of the therapeutic process with mutual learning occurring.</p>
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<p>925to <u>learn</u> how to do these things you 926start to <u>work</u> with clients you start to 927<u>realise</u> that they're the experts on their 928own situations and that you need to 929<u>learn</u> an awful lot from them,</p> <p>92. 930and that life is messy and complicated 931so you can't know everything</p> <p>93. 932so I think that kind of false arrogance 933that I had of thinking that it would be 934really easy and I would just <u>know what</u> 935to <u>do</u> has just left me and I feel that it 936has kind of left me and I'm <u>shaking</u> 937<u>myself down</u> a bit I'm <u>trying to work it</u> 938<u>all out</u>, trying <u>to work out</u> how to train 939myself to be a good therapist and then 940the <u>confidence will go back up</u> again 941but it won't be an arrogant sort 942hopefully it will be a kind of more 943<u>humble approach</u>.</p> <p>94. 944I've got no idea. It's kind of <u>difficult to</u> 945<u>say</u> when you're <u>stuck right in the</u> 946<u>middle</u> of it I kind of feel that I need to 947<u>climb up a mountain</u> to go and have a 948look back down again but I think I'm 949probably still at the stage where I'm 950probably <u>breaking it all down</u>. And just 951<u>trying to slowly build it</u> up again with 952building blocks cause</p> <p>95. 953I just have <u>so much to learn</u> still you 954know I've been in this placement for a 955year and a half and I've been in my 956other placement for 9 months and I'm 957<u>still learning so much</u> and I'm going to 958<u>continue learning</u> for decades I'm sure 959that every client that comes in is going</p>	<p>92. Realisation of nature of life and limits of knowledge as finite.</p> <p>93. Loss of previous expectations experienced as humbling which requires her to re-assess and in the light of this new knowledge to determine how she will develop into a good therapist without arrogance.</p> <p>94. Whilst in the learning process difficult to have a clear perspective on it but it involves challenging previous truths and assumptions and developing new and more adequate beliefs.</p> <p>95. Learning occurs in placements and from clients; the learning she feels she requires is still significant and ongoing.</p>	<p>92. Realisation of nature of life and limitations of human condition.</p> <p>93. Loss of previous expectations and assumptions relating to self and acquisition of therapeutic skill giving rise to re-assessment of how to become a therapist; emergence of a humble self-attitude.</p> <p>94. Perspective on change whilst it is occurring obscured but distance from this process is considered as allowing for a more accurate representation to emerge; change process characterised by challenging assumptions and truths and replacing with new knowledge.</p> <p>95. Receptive attitude to learning as a lifelong event which occurs through interaction with clients.</p>
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<p>960to <u>teach me something</u> new that I 961didn't know</p> <p>96. 962so maybe that's it, you're always in a 963stage of <u>trying to build it up</u> and I 964suppose that when I start a new 965placement I'll take a step back and I'll 966feel that I'm back down again that 967bottom of the pile.</p> <p>97. 968Not especially but just like in the sense 969of you imagine all the Lego pieces are 970spread out on the carpet that some of 971them are building up and then I just 972need to keep on building on it.</p> <p>98. 973Quite <u>satisfying</u> cause I feel like I'm 974maybe <u>assumptions or bad practices</u> 975or <u>attitudes</u> that I had are all <u>being</u> 976<u>shaken up</u> and it's given me the 977opportunity to <u>think more critically</u> and 978more <u>carefully</u> about what I am <u>doing</u> 979and kind of building those Lego pieces 980up slowly so that there is a <u>stronger</u> 981<u>foundation</u>.</p> <p>99. 982And going back <u>up again</u>, but I don't 983think I would have said that it was so 984positive even maybe 3 months ago 985when I was so 3 months less 986experienced in my XXXX placement 987so for example I would have been 988there 6 months and I remember <u>feeling</u> 989<u>so anxious</u> starting there so <u>deskilled</u> 990and I <u>knew nothing</u> about working with 991trans-gender clients and the <u>anxiety</u> 992<u>was almost unbearable</u>.</p> <p>100. 993Because I'm such a perfectionist I</p>	<p>96. Learning experienced as perpetually developing in a step-wise fashion with new experiences diminishing previous lofty position.</p> <p>97. Learning experienced in a step-by-step manner with each step consolidating what was learnt before.</p> <p>98. Through critically and systematically examining her assumptions, practice and attitudes the development of a more solid theoretical base is developed which is experienced as satisfying.</p> <p>99. She conceives of her development in upward terms; with the start of a placement associated with feeling highly anxious and deskilled as a result of her limited knowledge and experience.</p> <p>100. Learning has occurred through contrasting the</p>	<p>96. Therapeutic learning is experienced as in a constant state of development with new experiences challenging previous ones.</p> <p>97. Learning is considered as accumulative with current knowledge building on past knowledge.</p> <p>98. Academic thinking skills extended to re-evaluating and re-constructing personal assumptions and taken for granted actions with stronger sense of the basis of personal knowledge developed.</p> <p>99. Unbearable anxiety experienced in new context giving rise to evaluation of self having insufficient knowledge and skills to be effective.</p> <p>100. Learning has occurred through contrasting the previous feeling of</p>
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<p>994hated the idea of going into a 995placement where I <u>didn't know the</u> 996<u>answer</u> to a lot of things where I didn't 997have experience and I thought that I 998would just <u>show</u> myself to be <u>really</u> 999<u>stupid</u> and I think that I've <u>learned</u> over 1000time that yeah you <u>can't know</u> 1001<u>everything</u> you can't know at all times 1002but that's to be expected when you're 1003starting a new placement and it's <u>ok</u> 1004<u>to be anxious</u>.</p> <p>101. 1005But it's taken a <u>long time to work</u> 1006<u>through</u> that anxiety in fact it took 5 or 10076 months not to feel really anxious 1008going into that placement. I was so 1009<u>worried</u> that I wasn't going to do a 1010good job.</p> <p>102. 1011It is really <u>difficult</u> and I think it's really 1012it must be quite hard for clients, they 1013must be able to <u>pick up</u> on that you're 1014feeling anxious but</p> <p>103. 1015and now when I <u>go back on it</u> I think 1016what was the point of being so 1017anxious about it why did it matter of 1018course I'm a <u>trainee</u> of course I don't 1019know everything in that case but 1020that's ok but maybe that's just the 1021process that you need to go through.</p> <p>104. 1022Definitely I think it is a very unique 1023training process and in fact it is <u>up to</u> 1024<u>you to create</u> your <u>own work</u> so it's up 1025to you to go and find your own 1026placements, it's up to you to <u>make of</u> 1027<u>them</u> what you will and I don't know if 1028this is right or wrong but my view is</p>	<p>previous feeling of dread she experienced in relation to not knowing to an acceptance of anxiety as an appropriate response to a new situation.</p> <p>101. A placement evoked anxiety at the concern that she would not do a good job; processing and reducing her felt sense of anxiety has been a lengthy process in relation to the placement.</p> <p>102. She considers her anxiety impacts on clients.</p> <p>103. Retrospectively she has developed insight and accepted anxiety occurring in relation to not knowing and that this is inherent to the trainee role.</p> <p>104. She interprets the training process as unique through her work viewed as her own creation with meaning derived and created by her. The extent of this freedom is experienced as overwhelming and bewildering.</p>	<p>dread she experienced in relation to not knowing to an acceptance of anxiety as an appropriate response to a new situation.</p> <p>101. Anxiety experienced through fears of not feeling competence with her emerging through this experience.</p> <p>102. Anxiety thought of as detrimental and easily detected by clients.</p> <p>103. Anxiety experienced and elicited by the trainee role but attempts at making sense of this experience and acceptance of it occur retrospectively.</p> <p>104. Extent of the freedom in what she makes of her development is bewildering and overwhelming.</p>
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<p>1029that with the clinical placements they 1030kind of get given to you so someone 1031else has already checked them 1032through and said yeah they're ok, 1033they're great and the whole thing is 1034set up for you and maybe that feels a 1035lot safer possibly more contained and 1036there is a feeling here certainly for me 1037for the counselling psychology 1038doctorate thinking you could go out 1039and <u>find anything</u> it's kind of up to you 1040to make it what you want and that 1041can feel so overwhelming and 1042<u>bewildering.</u></p> <p>105. 1043There's all this <u>choice</u> out there <u>how</u> 1044do you go about picking <u>how do you</u> 1045<u>know</u> what to go for how do you know 1046whether it's <u>good enough</u> so many 1047questions.</p> <p>106. 1048So the placements are a big thing 1049yeah. I think. Biggest thing for me I 1050think anyway. And <u>know</u> do I have 1051<u>enough experience</u> am I getting 1052enough range of placements how 1053long should I stay, what should I 1054doing</p> <p>107. 1056and maybe the difficulty is also you're 1057also there maximum 1 day, 2 days a 1058week whereas maybe with the clinical 1059training you could be there all week 1060and maybe you would have a faster 1061<u>settling in process</u> and it might be 1062more intense the anxiety but you 1063might fit in a bit faster, whatever it 1064might be whereas you know if you're 1065just going in for 1 day a week it's</p>	<p>105. The extent of the choice of placements and the lack of certainty creates insecurity around quality and outcomes.</p> <p>106. Placements were experienced as arousing uncertainty around type and amount of experience she required.</p> <p>107. The limited amount of time spent in a placement and the isolating nature of the setting leaves her feeling an outsider and hampers her ability to settle in.</p>	<p>105. What constitutes her becoming and development by the choices she makes gives rise to uncertainty.</p> <p>106. Fears around adequacy of her clinical experience.</p> <p>107. N/A</p>
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<p>1066quite hard to <u>become part of a team</u> 1067so you can become a bit of an 1068outsider quite isolated I think. You 1069know you could be sitting all day in a 1070room by yourself seeing clients so 1071you don't necessarily get much 1072contact with the rest of the team 1073unless you go and really make an 1074effort and that can feel quite 1075awkward, 'hello I'm the trainee' trying 1076to introduce yourself to people 1077especially in gender where they are 1078all consultant so it is quite 1079intimidating. They're all psychiatrist, 1080they're all consultants, they're all very 1081kind of confident, quite overwhelming.</p> <p>108. 1082Especially simple stuff like they never 1083knock on the door before they come 1084into your room they just come barging 1085right in and you're on the phone and 1086it's so intrusive sometimes but um 1087yeah.</p> <p>109. 1088I do think <u>placements</u> have been the 1089most <u>anxiety provoking</u> and I do think 1090that is specific to counselling yeah I 1091know you do have placements 1092elsewhere but it's something about 1093them <u>being set up a bit more</u>, more 1094checked in on than in counselling 1095where you could just be <u>doing</u> 1096whatever and I do hear other people 1097on my course saying that they do 1098have placements at x,y,z and they 1099just don't have so much support or 1100whatever it might be and I think it's 1101quite tough.</p>	<p>108. N/A</p> <p>109. Placements experienced as provoking anxiety because she has experienced a lack of containment which would have been achieved through greater checks which would have provided more certainty around the quality of the type of experience she was getting.</p>	<p>108. N/A</p> <p>109. Distrust of what she would make of her development elicits anxiety with greater authority ascribed to external others in determining this.</p> <p>110. Anxiety limits a direct knowing of</p>
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<p>110. 1102Hindered me in the sense that the 1103anxiety definitely got in the way of 1104just being present in the counselling 1105room I remember feeling so anxious 1106starting off in my XXX placement 1107that I probably wasn't 100% present 1108with the client I was probably 1109worrying about I can't think what but 1110worrying that I wasn't going to have 1111anything useful to say, so definitely a 1112hindrance.</p> <p>111. 1113However I do think that some anxiety 1114can be quite productive so there's a 1115little bit of both there</p> <p>112. 1116but ultimately I have to say I think it's 1117probably helpful because those 1118emotions that you feel are just what 1119everyone else feels at some point in 1120their life and I'm guessing especially 1121people who come into therapy for the 1122first time maybe they have fear, 1123maybe they're very anxious or 1124whatever it might be so it's good to 1125kind of be in touch with those 1127emotions as long as you can 1128recognise them I think if you're going 1129around you know like a mindless 1130chicken and feeling anxious and not 1131even aware that's how you're feeling 1132then it's probably not so helpful but if 1133you can recognise that's how you feel 1134then use that as your touchstone so 1135when someone comes into to see 1136you and says my anxiety is so 1137unbearable I can barely concentrate 1138at work you can go 'oh yeah' I know 1139how that feels.</p>	<p>110. Anxiety felt to be a hindrance to her client work through detracting from being present in her experiencing; worrying about the adequacy of her responses were detrimental.</p> <p>111. Anxiety has a mixed quality with some benefits derived from it.</p> <p>112. Her experience of emotions is considered as beneficial through providing a source of commonality with clients and helping in the development of empathy; through experiencing of emotions she has developed recognition and awareness of emotions which she can use therapeutically to resonate with clients.</p>	<p>the interaction with an other with thoughts directed to concern over being perceived as useful.</p> <p>111. Anxiety has an ambiguous quality with some benefit experienced by it.</p> <p>112. Her experience of anxiety thought of as a shared human feeling and direct experience of this emotion assists in developing empathy; recognition and awareness of it as a means of deriving value from it.</p>
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<p>113. 1140Yeah and I think as long as you can 1141<u>manage it better</u> but I think had I had 1142all these feelings of anxiety and not 1143had a the an arena to discuss it like 1144therapy then it probably would have 1145been very <u>unmanageable</u> but having 1146a space an hour a week to <u>sit down</u> 1147and <u>reflect</u> on what had happened 1148over the week it started all to <u>make</u> 1150<u>sense</u> it starts to <u>come together</u> like a 1151bit of a jigsaw</p> <p>114. 1152it's like that classic thing of you know 1153of just beginning to <u>understand what</u> 1154<u>triggers</u> your anxious feelings or and I 1155think nothing creeps on me is a big 1156surprise so if I get anxious then I'm 1157like 'ok I can understand why I'm 1158feeling anxious' or if I get frustrated 1159I'm like 'yeah I can understand that 1160now' so that I don't get so taken 1161aback by very strong emotions I'm 1162more aware of why they're occurring.</p> <p>115. 1163I think a lot of <u>mindfulness</u>. I did a lot 1164of mindfulness and just <u>learning to</u> 1165just <u>observe your thoughts and your</u> 1166<u>feelings and your reactions</u> just to 1167take a bit of a <u>step back</u> and get 1168some distance in the way that you 1169are reacting and that has been a 1170really helpful tool so being busy trying 1171to <u>teach the clients</u> is actually 1172something that I've <u>taken on board</u> 1173myself a lot.</p> <p>116. 1174Yeah, yes I suppose. And I suppose 1175we're all clients to some degree so as</p>	<p>113. Anxiety made more manageable through therapy which through reflecting on this experience was rendered more coherent and imbued with more meaning.</p> <p>114. She has developed an understanding and through this an awareness of what gives rise to anxious feelings and other strong feelings.</p> <p>115. Learning has occurred through teaching clients therapeutic techniques; involves observing her experiencing and to distance her self from the immediacy of her reactions.</p> <p>116. Personal experience of the efficacy of the therapeutic techniques she uses with clients</p>	<p>113. Anxiety stimulates a sense of incoherence where meaning is derived from quiet reflection on the experience of it.</p> <p>114. Anxious experiencing leads to greater comprehension and tolerance of a wider variety of other emotional states.</p> <p>115. Learning through self and applied to others occurs through thought on and about the experiencing as it is occurring as a therapeutic intervention has been beneficial.</p> <p>116. Knowledge derived from direct experience of an emotional state and useful therapeutic intervention</p>
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<p>1176long as you can draw the boundaries 1177of that I think it's you know it's a bit 1178like you know having <u>limited self-</u> 1179<u>disclosure</u> sometimes in therapy you 1180can say 'yeah you know I've had a 1181<u>similar experience</u> and these are 1182some techniques that really helped' 1183so I think that I can share that with 1184clients.</p> <p>117. 1185Well quite easily really, I don't know 1186just like I said that they don't seem to 1187surprise me so I <u>make sense</u> of them 1188as being quite a <u>normal reaction</u> to a 1189<u>very stressful</u> 3 years of training. It 1190would make sense to me that I've 1191become anxious or stressed through 1192a lot of <u>high workload</u> and with 1193perfectionist traits and having to be 1194many different places within 1 week 1195you know between placements, uni, 1196this that everything it kind of seems 1197quite a normal reaction.</p>	<p>can be shared and is important.</p> <p>117. Development seen as normalising and greater acceptance of anxiety as response to stressful situation and training demands.</p>	<p>considered as more effective.</p> <p>117. Development and creation of altered meaning experienced through greater acceptance of anxiety as a normal as opposed to abnormal response to stressful situations.</p>
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SITUATED STRUCTURAL DESCRIPTION

LAUREN

The process which characterises Lauren's manner of becoming a counselling psychologist starts with the personal meanings and associations she has towards the counselling psychology profession as a whole and the trainee role in particular; these associations have the effect of influencing the manner in which she takes up this role and the affect with which she experiences it. At the start the trainee role represented a valuable and relatively high status position for her which filled her with a sense of achievement and purpose however her appraisal of the adequacy of what she was to learn was called into question through the perceptual filter of her personal history and personality; the adequacy of her training, characteristics and attributes she possesses and the standard of the course and training she will be receiving gives rise to worry and concern. The ideal of professional excellence is a powerful internal force which she applies to herself and to the aspects of her training which will contribute to her achieving this ideal.

The valuation which she attaches to diverse self-related experiences such as her competency, choice, experiences and the person she believes herself to be is determined by external referents with the possibility that these external evaluators can influence her interpretation of her own experiences as meaningless or meaningful. The power which others have to assuage her fears is of a temporary nature and it quickly gives way to feelings of intense anxiety. Her experience of affect and greater expressivity of emotions was implicated in her development and the manner and style in which personal changes occurred. The habitual manner with which she dealt with her emotions namely suppression was challenged through the environment of the training course which facilitated the expression of emotions; this facilitating environment encouraged a process of attitudinal change for Lauren through what she referred to as a 'mini-breakdown'. This experience was perceived as pivotal in achieving personal change through which she could feel acceptance of the choices she made and her position as a counselling psychology trainee. Her experience of personal change in an intensely emotional manner was considered to be positive in her developing therapeutic abilities. The benefit of painful

emotional experiencing occurs once the intensity and immediacy of the sensorimotor, affective and cognitive aspects of the experience have dissipated with recognition of the value to self development identified through reflection on the event in the past. Her interpretation of moving towards her goal of developing into a counselling psychologist is measured through referring to her emotional sensing and state.

The incorporation into self of a therapeutic attitude facilitates a change in the manner and mode of her experiencing and consciousness. An in dwelling attitude and the use of introspection as a stance promoted within the counselling psychology profession was considered as promoting self-analysis which was a means of developing self knowledge. The modes of intentionality which characterised Lauren's self-analysis were reflexivity with her consciousness directed towards self which shifted her previous unaware manner of existing to one which changed the quality of her presence to a more complete bringing of self into the encounter; this new presence involved vigilant contact with her affective, sensory and cognitive faculties in the present as illuminated by analysis of her past experiences. This awareness extended to self-other interactions with analysis of how her embodied selfhood might be perceived by others through her interactional style and in this sense her learning about self was co-constituted in relation to others. Arising from the self-analysis and in dwelling attitude Lauren moved away from her previous position of the appearance of life, others and existence as self-evident to one where she owned the idiosyncratic perception of existence as unique to her. Through the development of her self-knowledge and the ability to reflect in the moment on her consciousness and behaviour the possibility of choosing alternative modes of being opened up to her which had clear therapeutic implications. The quality of the realisations and self-knowledge which occurred to her was experienced as epiphanies.

Anxiety is experienced by Lauren in process towards achieving her goals or an idealised state or point. Her goals constitute a spectre for her inducing feelings of fear and anxiety that she will fail to achieve with her experiences evaluated according to how they match up to the ideal of excellence or perfection. Faced with the ideal of complete therapeutic knowledge she

experiences feelings of inadequacy that she will not be adequately equipped to manage a range of therapeutic situations competently which arouse anxiety; the first year position of limited knowledge and skill exacerbated this anxiety. In attempting to manage this anxiety she turns to others whose attempts at reassurance have only a time-limited effect with heightened anxiety breaking through. Anxiety occurs in relation to what the appearance of her development will take if she autonomously drives this process which causes Lauren to perceive others as having greater authority in determining the nature of her development.

The manner in which anxiety influenced Lauren's developmental process is seen through how her perception of this self-experience shifted over time, from one which disabled her to a change in her perception of anxiety as constituted by her perception and therefore amendable to a rational counter-response. Through this dialectic she has developed a calmer feeling with her intentionality one of greater awareness and vigilance. The style of her development is influenced by her experiencing anxiety and the manner in which it gives rise to a feeling of internal incoherence, emergence from this state has equipped her with greater self-knowledge and cognisance of emotions and the manner of their appearance.

Anxiety is understood as conferring a different meaning to how the self is experienced in relation to others and the world with her anxious experiencing felt as limiting the nature of her presence and awareness in interaction with others. It is considered as a defining possession of the self which emerges in the inter-relationship between self and the world which underscores the foundational role it has in the human condition. She considers that this experience of anxiety dispels notions of human perfection which she previously held and offers her an alternative understanding of the fragility of the human condition through the prevalence of anxiety as an experience.

The unknown nature of therapeutic training and context with this uncertainty interacting with Lauren's personal experiences where not knowing what the course would involve eliciting

anxiety and apprehension; these experiences were related to her fears around the adequacy of the teaching and transmission of knowledge and whether this would confer professional and technical competence. In navigating this uncertainty she felt the need for guidance and clear instructions relating to therapeutic work as a means of avoiding adverse emotional states such as anxiety.

The learning about self as an element of therapeutic knowledge and training occur for Lauren through an inward looking stance which promotes self-analysis of her assumptions, value system and prejudices; through this an awareness is created of how these taken for granted beliefs occur with Lauren considering that she has developed a clearer perception of self. Through exploration and reflection of her past, the nature and manner in which her behaviour manifests in the present is explicated with this awareness beneficial to the therapeutic context.

Lauren understands her learning as co-constituted within a relational context where she perceives her behaviour as occurring in response to others with knowledge of this as contributing to her awareness of self; there is an element of mutual learning which occurs between the client and her. Comprehension of how her behaviour occurs in a relational matrix has direct influence on how she understands and constructs the therapeutic encounter.

Learning is achieved through the experience of anxiety. This occurs in relation to self where through understanding her experience of anxiety and how it manifests she has developed greater familiarity of it which has increased her awareness; she is able to apply this comprehension and awareness to therapeutic work. The sense of internal incoherence which intense feelings of anxiety elicit prompts Lauren to engage in attempt to make meaning of it by manner of reflection. Through her direct experience of anxiety she has developed the ability to tolerate a wider range of adverse emotional states without feeling overwhelmed. Learning is demonstrated through her acceptance of anxiety as a normal response to stressful situations dismissing her previous position of anxiety as pathological.

Personal growth occurs for Lauren through the in-depth exploration of her personality organisation with greater self-knowledge occurring through this exploration. This self-knowledge is conceived of as providing her with insight which is associated with greater comprehension of self with this insight felt to be revelatory. She considers that self is enhanced through the experiencing and emergence from a painful process with the requirement that reflection on this process occurs. Part of this painful process involves critically examining and challenging assumptions and replacing them with more adequate knowledge which has been scrutinised more closely. She considers that a humble attitude has emerged from this process. However the personal significance of the change process occurs more readily through reflection on it as a past event with the intensity and immediacy of the dismantling of assumptions and knowledge obscuring an accurate representation. Through this process her developing self is characterised as possessing greater self-knowledge with greater self confidence arising from this with an ability to attempt novel things previously avoided. Her development is sensed through the difference in how she experiences things with comparison to past; this difference is considered as a greater flexibility with viewing knowledge as a process rather than an end state.

Experiential learning is considered by Lauren as particularly powerful through the feeling associated with the practical implementation of the technique; this facilitates the learning and acquisition of therapeutic skill. The rapidity with which knowledge is presented and the applied renders this means of learning especially powerful.

Self learning as impacting on therapeutic work occurs through the observational stance she assumes towards her behaviour which reduces the overwhelming quality of it and through this a developed ability to control her behaviour and responses in a therapeutic setting with reference to this as achieving a therapeutic goal. Knowledge is assumptions and values have assisted her in working with diversity through developing the ability to bracket off these assumptions. Learning about how therapy works through direct experience and application of these techniques to self greater knowledge of these techniques has been achieved.

Profound personal change has occurred with reference to existential considerations where becoming a counselling psychologist is not just acquiring a qualification but involves a life project which involves changes occurring on a fundamental level relating to her attitude towards her existence and manner of relating to others. Her development is conceived of as more extensive involving her identity, personal philosophy and approach with it taking place over time through her life and through this a personal meaning system is developed through awareness of how her values are represented in and through foundational philosophical notions. A departure from her previous thinking has occurred where her manner of relating to self, the world and others has become more inclusive and encompassing; it affects her Being and being through this kind of thought and reflection.